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FRANCE FROM WITHIN

Claire de Pratz

Frontispiece.

FROM WITHIN

BY

DE PRATZ

'ELISABETH DAVENAY,' ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

FRANCE FROM WITHIN

BY

CLAIRE DE PRATZ

AUTHOR OF 'EVE NORRIS,' 'ELISABETH DAVENAY,' ETC.

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HODDER AND STOUGHTON

LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

Printed 1912

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TO MY FRIEND AND EDITOR

ERNEST PARKE

IN TOKEN OF ADMIRATION

AND GRATITUDE

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AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTORY NOTES

In writing a book of this description, that purports to deal with the intimate customs and manners of a country, the author must first realize that two distinct views may be taken of the same objects—each of course from an entirely different standpoint. Indeed, these might be called the *inside* and *outside* points of view. The more usual is the *outside* view, and it is the one more generally adopted by the foreigner who, settling in the country he is about to describe for a certain number of years, months, or weeks, as the case may be, observes the ways and customs of the inhabitants around him, notes them down, compares them with the corresponding ways and customs of his own land, and finally, drawing his own conclusions, forms his opinions, which he gives out to his readers.

This exterior method of judgment may give excellent results, if the observations recorded be just and if the means afforded the stranger

by the inhabitants of the country under observation have enabled him to be competent to discern correctly. His inquiry—entirely gathered from the outside standpoint—may, in many cases, be merely superficial, for general and wide deductions can only be correctly drawn from ever-recurring and far-reaching experiences, and a large number of facts must be mastered before general laws and principles can be accurately deduced from them. Nevertheless, the observations thus gained may be of immense value, for the conscientious foreign student of a country may see many things, at least upon the surface, that are not apparent to the inhabitants themselves.

Yet, notwithstanding the undoubted usefulness of the outside point of view, the vision from within is at least as important, and indeed is absolutely necessary in order that a complete thoroughness of opinion may be obtained.

Though I fully recognize the value of the exterior standpoint, it is from the interior view that I have written this small book. But I do not pretend myself to be any wiser than my colleagues who have written before me upon the same subject, and there are certainly many things that may have escaped my scrutiny because I have lived in too close and intimate

contact with the objects of that scrutiny. My point of view therefore may, or may not, afford a special interest of its own to the reader anxious for many and many-sided opinions.

I have tried to be as impartial as possible, and if in many cases I have considered it my duty to refute certain false accusations, unjustly made by outsiders who were possessed of insufficient material to form a correct judgment, when forced to do this, I have very naturally defended my compatriots with fervour. And who will blame me?

But in order that my inside point of view be duly accredited and treated as reliable authority by earnest readers, I feel myself in a measure bound to give my own credentials here. They will explain my standpoint, the reasons of my judgment, and also why I am enabled to speak upon certain subjects with some authority.

On both sides of my family I am of purest French blood, and of French blood only without any alien mixture, though I was born in England and afterwards partially educated there. From my cradle I had both English and French nurses, living all through the years of my early childhood in an English nursery, although in accordance with good old French principles I spent

a great deal of my time each day in the company of my parents. My playmates were both English and French children, and when I was ten years of age I entered the preparatory school of a very old-established College for Women in London. Here I pursued my studies—uninterruptedly—for six years, though I usually spent my holidays in France among my French relations. Thus, outside my home during this time of schooling, not only did I speak English for the greater part of the day, but was in constant contact with English teachers and schoolmates, and was imbibing, unconsciously, the English point of view all the time. By this means I was afforded innumerable occasions for acquiring knowledge of England and a full understanding of English life, and for comparing it with French life. As soon as I returned from school each afternoon I came into my French home, and was once more in an entirely French atmosphere. My parents always spoke French—indeed, my mother never spoke English fluently at all—so that I heard only French spoken during all the latter part of the day. I do not remember any period of my life when I have not understood and spoken the two languages at the same time. In the midst of my Frenc

home surroundings I naturally acquired the French point of view; for not only my parents, but also those French residents in London who formed the circle of their more intimate friends, never failed, according to French habits, to discuss matters of all kinds before me, which helped materially, though I did not realize it at the time, to mature my French understanding at a very early age.

But it is not only the nation being described which a writer of a book of this kind must know well. More particularly still perhaps, must he possess a certain insight into the mental psychology of those for whom the book is written, and it is most necessary that he should know the opinions already formed upon the subject by his readers, so that he may be able to present facts to them in a convincing manner, and when necessary be able to correct any false impressions they may have received.

Now I think that I may confidently assert that, as a result of my upbringing, I thoroughly understand the English point of view concerning France. Indeed, had I myself possessed no other elements of appreciation of the French than those in possession of the English people among whom I was brought up, I should probably have formed, during the first sixteen or

seventeen years of my life, exactly the same opinions concerning France that were held by my English friends and acquaintances. From my earliest youth I had many opportunities of hearing these opinions frankly expressed before me, and could fully realize not only why they were conceived, but also why they were so often incorrect. For, though residing in England, surrounded by English people and attending the courses of an English college, I lived in a French home, environed by French ways, customs, and traditions, and was severely brought up by strict French parents upon French principles. I never remember any time of my life when I did not possess the two points of view—English and French—simultaneously, being constantly moving from one atmosphere to another. It was a strange education—the inner life belonging to the one nation, to the one race, the outer life being in continual contact with the life of another nation, another race. But it afforded me many opportunities for gaining a deep insight into the hearts of two essentially diverse nations.

After having obtained a diploma at my English college, I left England definitely and came to Paris to live, and to prepare for

my degree at the Paris Sorbonne. Some years after this had been obtained, I was offered the Professorship of English Language and Literature in a State Lycée for Women, which post I filled for eight years, and later was appointed General Inspectress of Public Charities at the Ministry of the Interior. During the two or three years that elapsed between the taking of my degree and my appointment to the Lycée, I held adult evening classes both in the Higher Primary Schools and the Technical Colleges of the Paris Municipality. Various members of my family were pre-eminent in the literary and artistic circles of the capital, and one of my nearer relations having been many years in the Cabinet, this brought me into touch with political society. Thus have I been afforded many opportunities for judging all kinds of French people, whether literary, artistic, political or merely social, while my knowledge of French working people was gained during my experiences in the Paris Municipal Schools and as Inspectress of Public Charities.

I must beg to be forgiven these personal details, which are only offered as a sort of guarantee of the truthfulness and sincerity of my own point of view in describing the ways

and customs of the various classes of French society.

Perhaps of all countries in the world, France is one of the most difficult for outsiders to know. There are many explanations of this, but more especially two principal reasons may account for the wrong impressions that are obtained of France—one that springs from a grave fault of the French people themselves, and the other which results from the erroneous methods of investigation which foreigners—more especially Anglo-Saxons—almost invariably adopt when studying France.

The French people, apparently so gay and debonair on the surface, are in reality hard to penetrate. Concerning their intimate affairs and in all the essentials of home life they are most reserved and keep to themselves. The old French proverb, *Il faut laver son linge sale en famille*, is but a confirmation of this truth. Though in some ways they appear to be almost abnormally frank concerning many details to which Anglo-Saxons would not dream of alluding, they will never discuss their intimate, personal, and family affairs before strangers. Thus, when a marriage is about to take place in a family, it will not be

announced until everything is completely arranged and decided, and the marriage contract almost signed, even to the most intimate friends and relations of the contracting parties.

Another important reason why foreigners are so often misled concerning the French as they are in their real and intimate life, is that for some whimsical reason—which I will not undertake to analyze here, and for which I beg my readers to take my word, merely stating it as a fact—they conceal their virtues with a curious, strange shyness, though they boldly exhibit their vices, often in a most exaggerated form, even boasting of defects they do not possess. They have, indeed, been most aptly called *les fanfarons du vice.* This attitude, which is the exact opposite of that adopted by Anglo-Saxons, makes it most difficult for Anglo-Saxons to understand them, and leads all superficial observers into the error of judging them as a far more wicked and frivolous race than they really are. Thus the French themselves help greatly in giving strangers a wrong impression of themselves.

Another reason why it is so difficult for Anglo-Saxons to judge France correctly, lies in the fact that, rightly or wrongly, they choose to consider Paris as the music-hall of the

world, probably because it is the city to which they may come for the more artistic kind of licentious amusement they cannot obtain in their own country. And, most shortsightedly, they judge France according to the very small proportion of French people they meet in Paris in those haunts of debauchery which cater exclusively for a foreign *clientèle.* These visitors, when in France, rarely if ever come into contact with French people of their own class and standing, for while in Paris they reside in hotels, the comforts of which are entirely arranged for their convenience, and in no way resemble the homes of the French. Thus they never touch upon the real inner life of the country, which is entirely different to the life of the pleasure-seeker in Paris. While in France they pursue an existence of amusement and rather improper gaiety (of which, to do them justice, they generally declare themselves heartily sick within a few weeks!), which is easier to live in Paris than elsewhere, because of the liberty of morals allowed, at least, in the outside life of the country.

But it is precisely because of this exterior freedom that the French family is the more reserved and closed to those foreigners who come to their capital for a life of dissipation. The

attractions of Paris for the stranger are in no way representative of the life of the French residents, but as foreigners associate this element of immoral amusement with Paris, they also associate it with all things French. Indeed, the very word 'French,' in certain Anglo-Saxon vocabularies, is considered to signify immorality and frivolity, though, in truth, no more serious, sober-minded race than the French themselves, in their inner home life, exists in any land.

It is probably because of the great difficulty of knowing and appreciating the French nation at home, and because of the paucity of their true knowledge of the subject, that so many Anglo-Saxon writers upon France have found themselves forced to repeat the same 'catch phrases' time after time to describe France and things French, without ever having ascertained, or having been able to ascertain, their accuracy. Sweeping judgments, given second and even third hand, are easy enough to make, but would be far more difficult to prove. Fortunately for the writers who make them, their readers themselves are still more ignorant, and have no means of obtaining any demonstrations of the truth of such easily-made assertions. It is by such unauthenticated methods that the word 'degenerate' has been hurled at France so often

by writers who have never been afforded the opportunity of discerning—and are therefore totally incompetent to do so—whether she is degenerate or not. These, for instance, judge the political spirit of the French according to the noisy harangues of certain boisterous politicians, who have no standing in their own country, but who, in the hope of appearing convincing, yell the loudest of all. They are therefore the better heard by the undiscriminating foreigner who, powerless to distinguish the real from the unreal, proves his own ignorance when he draws general conclusions from such misleading facts. It may be objected that outsiders see the most of the game. But it is necessary, in order to judge adequately, that such outsiders should at least know the rules of the game they are watching. A man who ignores the rules of golf would hardly prove able to judge of the proficiency of the golfers in a game played before him. It is always well to accept sweeping assertions—more especially those of a pejorative nature—most guardedly, and superficial statements, as well as the judgments deduced from them, ought not to be accredited by earnest readers.

What seems so difficult for Anglo-Saxons to understand is the French point of view. Indeed, there seems to be no possible means for them to

obtain it. Certainly not by means of their own regular journals, for these often constitute one of the great forces that pervert the truth. It generally happens that foreign journalists, who always remain on the outside of French life, are forced, often because of the exigencies of their reading public, to put French news (which they can but 'lift' from the French press, and they lack the discrimination necessary for judging what should be used and what should be left aside) into English dress before presenting it to an English-reading public. This means that they interpret French news in an Anglo-Saxon spirit, which naturally distorts the accuracy of their information. Even the most friendlily disposed of journalists do not seem to be able to escape from this attitude. French thought and actions are always represented as merely frivolous, while the profounder side of the French mind is rarely offered to the Anglo-Saxon judgment, either in political, intellectual, or social life.

When one reads the Paris news of any large daily or weekly newspaper of England or of America, one might reasonably expect to learn something of French life, effort, thought, or artistic and scientific productions. But one reads only about the doings and movements of English or American travellers in France.

Author's Introductory Notes

If by chance French subjects are alluded to in these reports, it is always with the *parti pris* of presenting them in an absurd or ridiculous light. It is only when a Blériot or a Paulhan's exploits arouse the admiration of the Anglo-Saxon public that Anglo-Saxons awake to the fact that France is neither so 'degenerate' nor 'merely amusing' as they have been led to believe.

When peace reigns and the arts flourish, France is ever foremost in the world of art; and so fully recognized is her superiority in this world, that not only are French artists nearly always *hors concours* in all art exhibitions in all lands, but the youth of those Anglo-Saxon countries who call her 'degenerate' still flock yearly in masses to her schools in search of her intellectual and artistic teaching. In those centuries when new social ideas are seething, France again leads the world, and gives her best blood in the great Revolution, while other nations look on her struggles in inaction, yet learn their own lesson from her sad experiences. All the socialistic ideas which are moving the world to-day, in all countries, have had their origin in French thought and action, and have been paid for in the blood of France. They are the natural and logical consequence of the

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French Revolution, though it yet remains to be proved, in the future, whether this was a good or evil effort for the ultimate benefit of the world. No country has ever given such heroes and such heroines to universal admiration as France, ever so generous to help others in the cause of justice. For who but France, in spite of the strict conventual education until recently forced upon her daughters and so strongly condemned by the so-called freer nations, has ever produced a Joan of Arc, a Jeanne Hachette, a Charlotte Corday, a Madame Roland, and yet again—even in this utilitarian, scientific, though unheroic age—a Madame Curie who, though of Polish extraction, is of French nationality and of French intellect? And when art becomes momentarily subservient to science, what nation—besides producing such men as Pasteur and Berthelot—has been foremost in the invention and construction of warships, submarines, motors, aeroplanes, airships, and wireless telegraphy—first invented by the Frenchman Branly—but so-called 'degenerate' France, and this in spite of her still recent sorrows and losses?

CLAIRE DE PRATZ.

LA-CLAIRIÈRE-AUX-GRESSETS AND PARIS,
January, 1911—*March*, 1912.

I

THE CHARACTER OF THE FRENCH

In endeavouring to describe the ways and customs of French people, I must first ask my readers to remember that I am forced to draw general examples and establish general conclusions from the collective mass, irrespective of class distinctions. And as the greatest number of representative types in a nation are always to be found in the largest class of all—which is the middle class—most of my examples are of necessity drawn from the *bourgeoisie*.

It will be well to bear in mind, however, that although in most civilized countries the ways and customs of the various classes differ greatly from each other, in France this is not the case. The several grades of French society are not so separated from one another in essentials as they are in many other nations; and all questions relating to family life, home customs, social habits, and educational processes, are approached, discussed, and resolved in the

same spirit, and from almost the same point of view, by all social classes alike. One does not find in France any of those deep divergences of caste and of traditional training that exist in such a land as England, for instance—divergences which separate the various classes of English society so completely that, in the appreciation of the foreigner, the dissimilarities between them are often even greater and more absolute than those between different nations. And not only is the natural homogeneity between the classes in France almost a national characteristic, but the democratic ideals which have so prevailed and permeated the nation since the great Revolution, have aided still further towards this uniformity of views. General assertions concerning French opinions and ideas must therefore be taken to apply equally to the aristocracy, the *bourgeoisie*, the working classes, and the intellectuals. The almost imperceptible divergences which do separate these classes are based rather upon a differentiation of *taste* than of habits and customs.

The aristocratic spirit in France resides in aristocratic circles only, and not at all among the lower or middle classes. There is no attempt made by these to imitate the particular ways and customs of people socially superior to themselves. For a long time, during the earlier days of the

Republic, the aristocratic families of France formed a set apart in the nation, holding themselves disdainfully aloof from the commoners who had founded the Republic and now formed the Government of their country. As they despised the men who had control of all the State offices, they affected equal contempt for the offices themselves. They therefore did not qualify for Government appointments, and tabooed all professions save those of the Army, Navy, and Diplomacy. In common with many of the richer *bourgeois* themselves, scorning trade and industry, their sole interest was sport, the pursuit of which is —in this country—too expensive an occupation to be within the reach of the less wealthy *bourgeois*, and so itself constitutes a class distinction.

This was the attitude of the older French families thirty years ago. But a new generation has sprung up since then, and the sons of those *révoltés* against the Republic, who neither witnessed the war nor the struggle for democracy which followed it, felt less acute resentment against the Republic than their forbears. Having, for the most part, been educated in Lycées, where they have been brought into contact with the boys of the *bourgeoisie*, they have gained a new point of view, less hostile and less vindictive. By degrees, those of the

younger and newer generations are now seeking openings for their energies, and are gradually entering upon those careers in the higher State Administrations which their fathers would have looked down upon with contumely. Though there still exists in France—and this throughout all classes—a professed contempt for trade in all its manifestations, of late years great *industriels*, when very successful and powerful, are being gradually admitted even to the most exclusive social circles, hitherto denied them.

The French *bourgeois* can hardly be assimilated to the middle classes of other nations, for he has an entirely personal spirit of his own. He does not cultivate that admiration for the 'hupper suckles' which characterizes the middle-class Englishman, and, as I have already pointed out, does not seek in any way to imitate the methods and manners of life of a class superior to his own. Though he is neither meek nor humble, he is an entirely unpretentious person, because he does not feel himself in any way inferior to those who are richer or better-born than himself. He is never pushing, and does not seek to make fine acquaintances. Whatever are his other faults, the French *bourgeois* is never a snob. He has, of course, the defects of his qualities, and much of his indifference to the

more refined habits of others may perhaps exist because he himself does not feel the want of refinement; and while he does not seek to assimilate the more expensive tastes of a richer class, he may be urged to this mainly by his indomitable instinct of thrift, which—be it frankly admitted—often comes near to meanness. Though he will not spend his money on what he considers useless show, he is in no way the intellectual inferior of his more patrician compatriot. One might even say that he is mentally superior to him. For having received a similar education, and knowing that he has only his own brains to rely upon to make a brilliant success of his career, he has applied all his energies to the cultivating of his mind. But, until recent years, the aristocratic boy who attended the same Lycée had not had the same incentive for his efforts, his parents denying him all hope of a professional career yet being so characteristically French that they could not conceive the possibility of any calling not directly controlled by the State.

The Lycée, or State College, to which boys of all classes, indiscriminately, are sent by their parents—because there alone superior culture can be obtained—is a great force for the levelling of the classes in modern France. As it admits of no social distinctions, the young *bourgeois* who

sits side by side on the school-benches with the sons of great nobles, is in no way considered inferior to his aristocratic schoolfellows, nor do these show any disdain for him.

Yet it is precisely by means of education that the more ambitious parents of the *petite bourgeoisie* or of the peasant classes hope that their sons may rise in the social scale. In France, culture alone can ennoble a baser-born boy and make of him—if he have the natural personal distinction, which is so often innate among the French—a gentleman; at least in all outward appearances. He has assimilated all the learning which can be obtained; he speaks his own language with the same purity of form and pronunciation as the highest in the land. And if he is gifted with natural good manners—which is the rule rather than the exception in all classes of French society—and makes not the slightest attempt at appearing to be what he is not, there is nothing to distinguish him, outwardly, from the true-born gentleman. Modern Republican France offers us innumerable examples of this type, and brains being far more appreciated in French society than money, the French *parvenu* is far less offensive, in all ways, than the *parvenu* of those nations whose worship is the golden calf. It is certainly because the Frenchman who has

risen from a very low rank to a very high one, has generally achieved this by his intellectual merit, and not by mere commercial acumen, that the position to which he eventually attains compels the respect of all.

Thus the greater politicians of France to-day have nearly all risen from the peasant or working classes. Educated at the local Lycées, they have received the best culture attainable, and, being essentially assimilative, have added a certain refinement to their naturally good manners, by association with their social superiors. I have seen certain Republican Ministers who have risen from the most obscure of peasant families in the same *salon* with crowned heads and with the aristocracy of foreign nations, whose manners, appearance, and conversation in no way differed from those with whom they were brought into contact. There was no self-consciousness, no awkwardness, no shyness; and, to all intents and purposes, no difference between them and their better-born fellows.

In all classes of French society to-day, the man who has achieved eminence by his own intellectual efforts takes precedence of all others, even those who bear the greatest historical names of France or those who have made, or inherited, large fortunes acquired in trade.

Perhaps it is because he never pretends to be what he is not that the French *bourgeois* commands the respect of all other classes. Those alone who are the most intolerant of *les bourgeois* are the intellectuals and the artists of Paris, who use the term '*bourgeois*' in a contemptuous sense. But the disdain of the artist for the *bourgeois* is merely amusing, and is in reality only on the surface, for nearly all the painters, writers, dramatists, &c., who constitute the class known as '*les intellectuels*,' are themselves of *bourgeois* extraction, and many of them retain throughout their careers the sterling common sense and earnest spirit of thrift which distinguish the social class from which they have sprung.

If England is the masculine country of the world, France is essentially the feminine country, for the principal qualities of the French are the characteristics which distinguish women. They have charming and graceful manners, though they lack the strong will and indomitable energy which is the distinguishing trait of the Anglo-Saxon races. Like women, too, they are inclined to use most of their strength to preserve and to harbour up what they already possess, rather than to set out upon fresh and hazardous enterprises. Even

their very remarkable habits of frugality are characteristically feminine. In all the industrial arts the essential quality of their taste and artistic genius is feminine too, inasmuch as they pre delicacy and perfection of execution to strong, rough-hewn, or merely suggestive work. Indeed, the finish which particularizes the work of the French in all branches of arts and crafts —even in such minor arts as cooking and needlework—is evinced by a nicety and preciseness which is more feminine than masculine in its attention to detail. Their adaptability and power of assimilation again are entirely feminine attributes, as are also their lack of emotional discipline and their too often excessive exuberance. The French are inventive and clever, and if they possessed the persistent, untiring, and patient energy of the Anglo-Saxon races they might be the first nation in the world. Happily for those who belittle them, they have their limitations! They are recognized to be an essentially skilful, efficient, and artistic race, and cannot be expected to possess the opposite qualities which do not frame in with their own particular genius.

The essential racial differences between the French and the English, for instance, lie in the fact that the French are absorbing and assimi-

lative, while the English are aggressively and wilfully non-adaptable. The French believe that they have much to learn from other nations. The English are inclined to believe that they have nothing to learn from anybody. But as nations, like individuals, always possess the qualities of their defects, this non-adaptability of the Englishman constitutes his very strength, and makes his race the dominant race when brought into conflict with more barbarous peoples. That is why he is so excellent a colonizer among inferior communities. But when in contact with other civilized nations, he can learn nothing from them. He carries his own habits and customs and personal idiosyncrasies wherever he goes, and considers them infallibly superior—because they are English—to the habits, customs, and idiosyncrasies of the inhabitants of the country in which he has decided to live. His cup of tea and his morning tub are the essential symbols of his personality; and so strong indeed is his individuality that —if the people among whom he settles are themselves intelligently assimilative and judge the tea and tub to be good things in themselves — the Englishman's characteristics will eventually become adopted by the nation in which he settles. The Englishman will always

remain English wherever he is, and will disdain to make any effort to understand the manners and customs of those around him, even though they may be worthy of his highest admiration. They will not interest him, merely because they are 'not English.' In the estimation of this extreme type of Britisher, the adjective 'excellent' appears to be synonymous with the word 'English,' for when abroad he sees something he is forced to admire, he will exclaim: 'This thing is indeed *English!*' meaning that it is indeed *excellent.*

Now the French are utterly unlike the English in this respect. Their fault is that they are only too much inclined to underrate their own qualities and too ready to believe in the superiority of the stranger. When they settle in another land, it will be observed that they soon begin to assimilate what they consider to be the better qualities of those among whom they have made their home. Indeed, having lived a good deal, during my early youth, amongst French settlers in England, I have observed that there exists no more enthusiastic Britisher than the Frenchman whose forbears have settled in England and who has become a British subject. By the continual absorption of environing characteristics, the Frenchman may thus himself acquire many new

qualities. Yet his gift of assimilation in no way destroys in him his own national temperament. In spite of his capacity for understanding and sympathizing with other countries—and though he may gain new characteristics and fresh points of view which refresh his own comprehension—the peculiar genius of his own race is still so strongly compelling, that even his newly acquired qualities become apparently intrinsically French!

Of late years, the Anglo-Saxon mania has spread over France to an enormous extent. Not only are the fashions, ways, and habits of the English and Americans copied, but also their cooking, games, and amusements. And although this sudden love of all things English is, in a sense, a form of snobbery, there is no doubt that it indicates a true appreciation of English ways and customs. Since the *entente cordiale* a sincere wave of enthusiasm for England has swept over France. But enthusiasm in its most exaggerated form sometimes falls wide of the mark. In their rather passionate, therefore indiscriminating, admiration, the French are apt to endow the English with qualities they have never possessed. For instance, it is a fashion with the French to commend the practical sense of the English. *Ah! l'Anglais si pratique!* Now, earnest and accurate observers of both countries cannot fail

to note that in many ways the French are a far more practical nation than the English. Their habits of thrift, prudence, and foresight, the efficient manner in which they adjust the various relationships of their lives, the system by means of which they arrange their marriages and careers, show in the French a careful, cautious and therefore practical prudence which the English entirely lack. The English are certainly practical enough in all the material ways which aid their own small personal comforts, but the French are far more so in adjusting the fundamental basis upon which they set their existence.

The French have an almost universal reputation for frivolity, but surely that is merely the result of the shallow appreciation of those who are incompetent to judge, because they lack discrimination or true knowledge. Certainly the French are more pagan than puritan—insomuch that they believe in the joyousness of life, and the brighter and more amusing aspect of things delights them. But, unlike the English, they can be serious and earnest without being glum. They have a tremendous sense of humour, and even those engaged in the most austere careers of business, science, or art, possess a great sense of happiness in their own work, and enjoy it in a

merry and *enjoué* manner. Yet this does not mean that they are frivolous in essentials. On the contrary, they are profoundly absorbed in everything that they do, and the essential characteristic of the frivolous is superficiality. But they have very nimble brains, and even when in deep earnest they are not averse to an occasional burst of merriment. Rarely are they subject to the dismal depression and anxious joylessness of the Anglo-Saxon when overwhelmed with strenuous work or care. This inner joyousness of life is one of the graces of the French character. But it is far removed from frivolity, and is the mark not of a superficial, but of a profoundly philosophical race. It often conceals deep troubles, for the French consider cheerfulness as a social duty, and it is part of *la bonne éducation* to refrain from forcing private grievances upon others. Indeed, it may be said that the French cultivate their light gaiety of manner as a social duty. The dour Anglo-Saxon, who takes the worries of his life so seriously and with such exterior gravity, cannot understand that lighter gaiety, and therefore judges it as levity. But it is not. The French possess the marvellous gift not only of appearing to make light of what is deadly earnest to themselves at heart, but they also possess the rare gift of laughing at themselves. Their sense of humour is of

the most delicate, most subtle quality. They may appear to jest and to joke upon serious subjects, but that is merely their social manner of treating such subjects. It is their social conception of life, which throughout so many generations has become almost an inherent characteristic, which precludes them from thrusting upon outsiders the sour visage that carries personal anxiety written upon it. More often than not the apparent gaiety of the French during a period of stress or sorrow is but another form of that reserve which the Anglo-Saxon conceals beneath his graver mien. A Frenchman will laugh at himself to the bitter end; and the attitude of the old aristocrats, who drove to the guillotine smiling and jesting to their last hour, is but a proof of this form of reserve. On a battlefield—among their dead or dying comrades—French soldiers will crack jokes and make witty sallies, for *mourir en gaieté* is the aim of every French soldier. Not to affect others by one's own sorrows, not to afflict friends by the sight of one's own despair, and to hide all gloom beneath a cheerful lightness of heart—surely this is a noble form of social altruism.

Nevertheless, it is precisely this attitude which often causes them to be accused of insincerity by false and shallow judgments. Their con-

versation is so easily graceful, their social manners are so refined, that strangers from rougher-mannered lands are inclined to consider these characteristics as mere surface politeness. But politeness in France has a deeper meaning. It is essentially the quality of a cultivated race, and it will be remembered that the older and more highly civilized nations of the world have always been greatly addicted to form and ceremony. Often the courteous manners of the French are a means of keeping off undesirable acquaintances, and serve as a high barrier of reserve, which is surely a far more delicate method than the repellent, rude manners which certain foreigners adopt with outsiders in order to maintain their distances. Polished amenity reveals the educated refinement of the man who practises it rather than real consideration for those to whom it is addressed. The well-bred Frenchman is as courteous in his manner to inferiors as to equals—indeed more so, for with inferiors he would be *excessively* polite. A French gentleman always takes off his hat to speak to the maid-servant who opens the door for him, and invariably addresses her as '*Mademoiselle.*'

The Englishman is inclined to think that the Frenchman gives himself too much trouble to

please; but on the other hand the Frenchman considers the blunt, graceless manners of the middle-class Anglo-Saxon often rude and ill-bred, and entirely lacking in refinement; and although the manners of an Englishman when at home in his own country are so excellent, one is often inclined to share the opinion of the French when one finds him abroad. It is the somewhat extreme politeness of the Frenchman which proves his hyper-civilization, for the more primitive races lack grace of manner. *La politesse vient du cœur* is a French proverb. The well-bred politeness of a Frenchman can never be assumed; it is entirely natural, or rather it is so essentially a part of a Frenchman's traditional training that it has become his second nature. Indeed, when he wishes to indicate that a person has bad manners, he says '*Il manque d'éducation*,' which does not mean to imply that the fellow lacks learning, but good manners.

The rather formal quality of that French politeness which precludes intimacy is often disconcerting to the stranger, who is apt to confuse a polished manner with real feelings, whereas it is but a part of a social education. One may know a Frenchman for many years without ever going beyond that first stage of sociability which

appears so delightful to strangers. Beyond it there is an iron wall of reserve, for the Frenchman defends his intimacy more than any other man in the world. It often happens, when strangers first arrive in France, they think that social relations are going to be quite simple with so *facile* a people as the French. But they soon find out that they cannot get beyond that cold surface of exquisite manners. It is almost impossible for a stranger to come into intimate and close contact with the French, for notwithstanding their charming and spontaneous affability, there are no more difficult people to know intimately. In all their social relations they are far more punctilious and exacting than the Anglo-Saxons. Thus, for instance, French people are most punctilious in the matter of attending funerals, and often go to the obsequies of people they have never known in real life, merely as an act of courtesy to the relations of the deceased. Nevertheless, despite their forms and ceremonies—concerning formal calls, marriages, letter-writing, leaving cards, &c.—the French are in reality a far less sociable race than the English and Americans.

Although strangers from all parts of the world come to live in France, French people fight shy of them, and do not care to become closely

acquainted with them. They are never aggressively rude, but their studied politeness is a proof of their indifference. If one were to endeavour to analyse the French distrust of strangers one would find that, because they themselves never leave their own beloved country to settle elsewhere, except under compulsion, when they have been forced to do so because of their own ill conduct, they are inclined to believe that all strangers who reside in France have similar reasons for living out of their own land. And though in general they are more distrustful of strangers than of their fellow-countrymen, it cannot be said that a Frenchman's home is easy of access, even to his own compatriots. It takes many years of acquaintanceship to be on terms of intimacy with a French family. The reasons for this are so numerous and complex that they cannot be analysed here at length, for a whole volume might be devoted to the study of them.

Perhaps it is largely the fact that French people rarely invite their friends to stay in their own houses that can explain the slower growth of intimate friendship between the French than between Anglo-Saxons. People soon become intimate who live under the same roof, and are better acquainted after a week's

'stay' together in the same house than by means of many years of formal visits. Another reason which precludes intimate friendship in France is the complete devotion to one's family which characterizes all French people. They are so absorbed by their own relations that they have less time or sympathy to devote to outsiders than Anglo-Saxons, who are far greater individualists. The French family, compared to an Anglo-Saxon one, is more like a 'clan' that lives for itself alone—armed against the rest of the world. And the French *bourgeois* is not only eminently respectable, but he is terribly conventional too, and cannot tolerate any originality of character. The phrase *Il faut être comme tout le monde* has almost passed into a proverb in the provinces, where the distrust of strangers exists largely from a fear of mixing with people of more independent and original temperament.

Foreigners, and more especially Anglo-Saxons, are fond of asserting that the French are a vicious and immoral race, and to prove their point refer to the novels and drama which the French themselves produce. Now this, again, is an example of the erroneous opinions formed by those who, not possessing the necessary elements which might enable them to form a true estimation, judge the people of a nation whom they

do not know upon the same basis as they would judge their own compatriots, whom they *do* know.

It is very true that if English and American writers produced studies of English or American life which resembled French novels in the least, the world at large might be justified in judging from such literature that the English or Americans were very immoral people. But English and American novelists and playwrights take as subjects for their romances the occurrences of everyday life, describing the usual habits and customs of their own countries as they are, even when they are dull in themselves, and evidence their own personal talent by their faithful descriptions of everyday life. The French writer has an entirely different vision, and proceeds from another point of view. When he sets to work on a novel or drama, he usually seeks to depict exceptional characters or a crisis in human lives. Rightly or wrongly, he finds no pleasure in the description of everyday occurrences. That is why modern French literature does not reflect modern French life, but only its egregious examples; and that is why it is erroneous to consider French fiction to-day as truly representative of the habits of France.

Unfortunately, the French themselves greatly aid towards the opinion which strangers form of

their morals, because they wear all their vices on the outside—blatantly, flagrantly. When speaking of them, one might almost paraphrase the advice of Polonius and declare that they "Assume a vice if they have it not"! Now, as the method of the Anglo-Saxons is to exhibit their virtues and conceal their vices, they judge the French from their own point of view, and therefore judge them wrongly.

Yet it sometimes happens that a Frenchman, when he reads the reports of the English and American Divorce Courts, recorded so lengthily in the newspapers of England and America, or the famous *causes célèbres* and society scandals with which the English-reading public has been so widely gratified of late years, is inclined to consider the Anglo-Saxon as a hypocrite. Though French people usually admit, when it is pointed out to them, that the hypocrisy of the Anglo-Saxon has its advantages if viewed from a national standpoint, it is very unlikely that, in this at least—notwithstanding their admiration for Anglo-Saxonism—the French will ever emulate the English. For the hoisting of the petard of vices that they do not possess and the careful concealing of the many virtues they really have, seem to be one of the most cherished characteristics of the French people.

The Character of the French

Another of the greatest failings of the French character is the shameless application to all those in a position of power for 'protection,' or what is known in English as 'friends at court.' As three-fourths of the nation finds employment in the various *Administrations d'État*, and as appointments to these are controlled by the Cabinet Ministers and the higher officials of the Government, from the top to the bottom of the ladder those in power are pestered with demands for aid, protection, and favouritism. Anybody who has had the misfortune to be related to persons in power can testify to these unblushing demands for what is derisively alluded to as *pistonnage*. People whom one has never seen, and whom one is never likely to see, who have only heard of one through hearsay, individuals of all classes to whom one owes not the slightest obligation of any kind, will not hesitate to write and apply for aid in favour of their son's wife's cousin's *concierge*, or someone equally as remote from their interest, who is applying for some minor post under Government! Although each post in State Administrations, however small it may be, necessitates individual training and special qualifications, there are so many more applicants than vacancies—often there are hundreds of candidates for a single post—that it is the

best *pistonné* or 'protected' candidate who ultimately obtains the much coveted appointment. These 'protections' seem to be indispensable for the advancement of the careers of all State *employés*. Really excellent State servants who have no powerful friends may remain for years forgotten in some small post, without getting promotion in their professional career, merely because they have no friend or friend's friend ready at hand to speak a word for them to the Minister in power. And as Cabinet Ministers change often in France, there is an everlasting process of intrigue of this kind going on throughout the country. Each new Minister brings in his train hosts of such applicants. Some years back one of my own relations was in the Cabinet, and it was perfectly incredible, during the whole of the time he remained in power, the number of letters I received every morning from various people whom I knew either slightly or not at all, begging me to intercede in their favour. From such humble State servants as policemen or railway porters to the more magnificent officials who sought to fill some of the higher posts in the State Administration, batches of letters came each morning containing demands and appeals for intercessions. A Minister in power is pur-

sued everywhere by all his friends, who carry innumerable 'notes' in their pockets, ready prepared to hand to him upon every favourable occasion. These 'notes' are small slips of paper upon which have been written the name of the 'protected' candidate and his various qualifications for the post he solicits. They generally concern people who are totally unknown both to the man who 'protects' them and the Minister who ultimately appoints them, and have migrated upwards towards the Minister himself by many laborious steps, passing from hand to hand, while at each stage equivalent obligations have been incurred. Women—still more than men—are subject to demands of this kind, and those who have *salons* and a large acquaintance among prominent men, make a real business of thus intriguing for posts. Of course the *protecteurs* who thus intercede for others, though they may have been most assiduous in their efforts on behalf of utterly unknown applicants, do this in a purely disinterested way, and there is not the slightest suggestion of any material remuneration in any form. Yet such services put those who have benefited by them under a great moral obligation.

This system of *pistonnage*, or 'protection,' brings about a state of affairs which makes it

almost impossible for any one holding a position of power—or connected with any one in power—to believe in the true disinterested sympathy of any one. The obsequious, flattering sycophancy that accompanies such demands for intercessions and which continually surrounds Cabinet Ministers or high officials, is alarming to observe; and all down the social scale that same spirit of what is vulgarly known in England as 'boot-licking' prevails.

France is essentially the country of taste—and I use the word in its very broadest sense—taste in art, taste in dress, taste too in all the minor arts of life. The French certainly possess a nice and precise adjustment of the critical function. It prevails among people of all classes, educated and uneducated. Taste in cooking and in food in France is extremely fastidious. Even the very poorest people will not be put off with edibles of inferior quality, and there is no market in France for the cheap articles that pretend to be dainties of superior quality. At no French grocer's of any description will you find—what you find in London in every popular thoroughfare—cheap jellies made of coloured gelatine and flavoured with acids, custards that are made without eggs and are composed of cornflour or arrowroot, cheap jams, of which several pounds can be

bought for a shilling, made of various vegetable substitutes for fruit and glucose instead of sugar. Even the poorest classes in France insist upon pure food. They will not buy adulterated goods, and steadfastly refuse them, not upon moral or scientific grounds, but because they offend their taste. '*Cela n'est pas bon*' is their sole verdict, and they persistently refuse glucose jams and cornflour custards, preferring wholesome dry bread instead.

When an English dish is introduced into France and becomes popular there, it is cooked far better than it has ever been before in England, because of the careful attention to detail. Take, for instance, the English cakes and pastry made in Paris. There are a few shops in Paris where these are made by French people. Once you have learned where they are situated—if you are a person of taste—you will never go to any other English establishment afterwards. In the centre of Paris there is a street well known to the Parisians, where there are two pastry-shops—one French and one English. In both of these, English cakes and pastry are made a speciality. Now the ingredients used are probably identical in quantity and quality in both establishments. But it is probably the mixing or the flavouring, and above

all the attention bestowed upon the smallest details in the making, that constitutes the immense difference between the achieved article in the one establishment and the other.

It has constantly been said that French cooking is superior to English. But English cooking is only bad because it is badly done, and the same dishes cooked in France are excellent. Nothing can be better than plain English food —joints and plain boiled vegetables—when well achieved; but how often does one get these well prepared in England? It is no wonder that French visitors staying in London complain of English cooking!

I remember some years ago talking to a well-known English writer, who was one of the most brilliant *causeurs* of his time. He knew the French character rather well and appreciated all things French. He was speaking to me one day about a certain restaurant not far from the Madeleine, where the special dish that was the renown of the establishment was plain boiled leg of mutton *à l'Anglaise*. But he—personally—averred that he had never tasted anything like it in his life on English soil! The dish was so celebrated that on the days when it formed the *plat du jour*—which were well known to his ordinary customers —the owner of the restaurant was in the habit of

receiving several *petits bleus* from all over Paris, and even from absentees in the country during the course of the day, ordering portions of this well-beloved dish to be reserved for them for the midday or the evening meal. The English *littérateur* in question once, having spent a whole afternoon in the country, had himself telegraphed at about three o'clock to the *restaurateur* to reserve him a portion for dinner. Great was his disappointment therefore, when he arrived hungry and expectant from a day's shooting near Fontainebleau, at eight o'clock in the evening, to learn that, notwithstanding his telegram, there had been such a demand for the dish that day that not a morsel remained!

The same writer never wearied of expressing his admiration for the French *garçon*, who takes so great an interest in the welfare of his customer, helping him to choose his *menu* with particular care and taste, ever anxious to know if his client is pleased and is enjoying his food with that degree of voluptuous degustation with which the real connoisseur partakes of his meals.

'*Monsieur trouve ça bon?*' he inquires, rubbing his hands together and looking on paternally, like a father delighted to see a favourite son enjoying himself.

All these details tend to show that French

taste is extended to all kinds and forms of enjoyment. And yet—when carefully considered—the difference between good and bad taste is but a mere question of appreciation in degree and detail. It is because they possess this quality of critical taste that, when the French make a thing of which they are not the original creators, they produce a better and more finished article, giving it a delicate and more final completeness than it has known before. Take, for instance, an English 'blouse,' which has become an almost indispensable part of woman's attire, and compare it with a French one. You will find that while the English originated the idea of a garment for women made like the loose top part of a man's shirt, the French gave it line, elegance, detail and finish; so that English women at once came to Paris to buy blouses, even though the original model was created in England.

Taste is largely the result of attention to small details. The blouse made by a great *couturier* is cut, fitted, sewn and trimmed exactly on the same lines as a blouse made by a small seamstress. But the dainty garment turned out by the *couturier* is a very different production to that of the small dressmaker; and the difference has been achieved only by an applied attention to detail. Even the supremacy of taste

that Frenchwomen show in their manner of dressing is but the result of this careful and conscious effort.

II

In scarcely any part of this book do I quote other literary works to prove my point. I have drawn my own observations and formed my own conclusions from the great mass of people, of all classes, whom I have known intimately in this country, and I have tried in no way to base my affirmations upon the observations of other writers. But the play I now have before me—which is Brieux's *La Française*—performed at the Odéon Theatre some four or five years ago—draws the same conclusions and takes up the same point of view as myself. I feel that by quoting it I can but emphasize my own statements, for it is animated with the same spirit that has inspired me in writing this small book.

At the time the play opens, Pierre Gontier, with his wife, Marthe, and his daughter, Geneviève, are staying at Trouville for the summer, and are at present awaiting the arrival of Pierre's nephew—Charles, the son of Pierre's elder brother and a Canadian mother, who has been brought up and educated in America. He is accompanied by his friend, Bartlett, who has acted as a second father

to him. For Charles's own father, Gontier senior, who had long lived in America, where his son was born, left the States after the death of his wife to return to his old family manor in France, henceforth to live as a recluse, confiding his son to the care of his friend Bartlett. Charles, who has been educated at Harvard, is therefore, to all intents and purposes, an American citizen. This is his first visit to his father's country. While they are awaiting his arrival from the Havre boat, lounging comfortably on the terrace of their villa, Pierre and his wife and Geneviève speak together of various things. Thus we learn that Pierre, who is an engineer, has not been successful in his business, and, according to the habit of Frenchmen, is discussing the technical part of it with his wife—for the French wife is always her husband's friend and business partner. Incidentally, too, they speak of a possible marriage for Geneviève. They also approach her upon the subject, and thus we see how a marriage is brought about in a French family and how the young French girl accepts the situation arranged for her by others. Then Charles appears. He is very correctly, very conventionally, the American. He has been invited to bring his friend Bartlett to dinner, and incidentally, Marthe, learning that Bartlett is

partial to cocktails, sets to work with Geneviève to prepare him one after her own fashion. This is very indicative of French hospitality, for the French, anxious to please and honour their guests, always make an effort to offer foreigners their own favourite home dishes. I remember a French provincial lady of my acquaintance who, wishing her children's new English governess to feel quite happy and comfortable on the evening of her arrival at her new post, had provided a large bottle of whisky and a fat jar of pickles her special delection. Convinced that English girls drank whisky and ate their meals and condimented pickles with each course at dinner!

In the second act of Brieux's play the scene is laid in the old family manor of the Gontiers, where the elder Gontier leads his recluse life—shooting and fishing all day long. His wife and children, as well as Barthelmy and Charles, are all his guests, and as there is a question concerning something of interest throughout the locality to decide, a committee of representative townsmen has been called to meet at Gontier's house for discussion. Here we have a very interesting and characteristic scene, which shows the customs and attitudes of the French when on political subjects. But before the meeting takes place there is a pretty scene

between Charles and Geneviève, who sings him the songs of his own Canadian land set to old French tunes — for did they not originate in France? They speak together of Geneviève's probable marriage, and Charles is very severe on young girls who marry without love. But Geneviève explains how all young girls marry in France with resignation, and defines the exact psychology of the *jeune fille*. Yet Charles can see that she is far from happy in her *mariage de convenance*.

CHARLES. But you do not love your *fiancé*.

GENEVIÈVE. No, but perhaps love will come.

CHARLES. And if it does not? Then you will love some other man.

GENEVIÈVE. Oh, no, no! I do not say that that does not sometimes happen, but it is more often in books than in real life.

CHARLES. And so if you do not love your husband . . .

GENEVIÈVE. I shall do what so many others have done before me. I shall try to be a loyal and devoted companion to him. . . . If I have the merit of making some sacrifices, my own personal pride shall be my reward. . . . And if I have children I shall simply adore them. . . .

CHARLES. How can you have allowed yourself to become engaged?

GENEVIÈVE. How can I say? A girl's parents think it their duty to propose some young man to her. . . . She may refuse one or two, but a day comes when she thinks it would be wise to make a choice. . . . Then the thing gets spoken about and she has not the courage to break off. . . . She doesn't like to disappoint her people; and she gets to the

very day before the wedding without knowing how she got there! Then she smiles so as not to be pitied by others, and she persuades herself that she is happy! . . . She attains that state by never being alone a moment to think; by trying on her gowns and preparing for the wedding all the time. . . . Oh, why have you forced me to tell you all this? . . .

This scene has begun to show us the feelings of the young cousins for one another. They are interrupted by the people arriving for the meeting. Gontier, Pierre, Bartlett, Charles, as well as Husson and Serget—friends of Gontier senior—are present. Both Husson and Serget are very interested in meeting Americans, and immediately begin to question Charles and Bartlett about their own land.

In this conversation we are able to observe the attitude of the French concerning their own failings and their readiness to believe in the superiority of other nations—or rather their readiness to believe all that foreigners say about their own countries. As the conversation takes place between four Frenchmen and two Americans, it is interesting to note how the author has directed the debate.

HUSSON and SERGET. (*To* BARTLETT, *looking at him curiously.*) So monsieur is American.

SERGET. (*To* BARTLETT.) Have you been in Europe long monsieur?

BARTLETT. A month.

HUSSON. And did you spend much time in Paris?

BARTLETT. Yes, several days.

SERGET. What is your impression of France?

GONTIER SEN. Don't ask that, my dear friend. You confuse Mr. Bartlett, who is too polite to be able to be frank.

Here is a Frenchman—and of the old school too—who immediately infers that a foreigner must necessarily compare France unfavourably with his own country.

BARTLETT. I assure you . . .

ALL. (*Protesting.*) Please do not hesitate to speak the truth . . .

SERGET. We Frenchmen no longer now believe that our land is the first country in the world.

HUSSON. (*To* BARTLETT.) Please speak out frankly to us.

SERGET. We are quite capable of hearing the truth about ourselves, and are quite certain in advance that it won't be flattering . . .

BARTLETT. Well, as you insist. . . . Evidently France cannot be compared to America.

GONTIER. Of course not!

SERGET. That we know is the case.

HUSSON. And we do not in the least pretend to establish any comparison.

BARTLETT. But it seems to me nevertheless that France is really a fine country.

CHARLES. You do not know the charm of your skies and horizon because you contemplate them every day. . . . I had not been an hour in the train, after having left Havre, before their charm was affecting me greatly.

GONTIER. How? In what way?

CHARLES. At a small station where the signal had stopped our express, a man was watering flowers for the sole pleasure

of his own eyes and those of the passengers. . . . I could almost have hugged him. . . . He was spraying water over the roses and geraniums with the peaceful and attentive gestures of a man performing a religious rite. . . . For the first time in my life I could look at a man who was not running after the dollars. . . .

BARTLETT. Yes, certainly. . . . And France is nevertheless a rich country.

GONTIER. Ah, formerly it was.

HUSSON. (*To* BARTLETT.) Now do please give us your impressions frankly.

BARTLETT. Well I assure you they are very favourable indeed.

PIERRE. (*Ironically.*) So favourable indeed that you fear to offend these gentlemen! . . .

SERGET. Your courtesy is delightful, but nevertheless, after your own country, with its large spaces and wide energies, ours must seem very narrow to you—very mean and paltry.

BARTLETT. Not so much as you think.

HUSSON. Oh, yes, it must! . . .

BARTLETT. No, I assure you . . .

ALL TOGETHER. (*Without much spirit.*) Indeed it must.

SERGET. If you spoke of England now . . .

GONTIER. (*Admiringly.*) Oh, the Anglo-Saxons! . . .

SERGET. (*The same.*) Oh, the Anglo-Saxons! . . .

ALL. (*With eyes uplifted and respectful admiration.*) Oh, the Anglo-Saxons!

BARTLETT. We have not your atmosphere; we have not your monuments either. . . . I spent just a week in aris. . . . I was struck with its beauties. . . . The Invalides. . . . L'Arc de Triomphe, Notre Dame! . . . Oh, by the way could you tell me—I could not find out in Paris—how much Notre Dame cost to build?

HUSSON. I confess I do not know . . .

CHARLES. Where could the information be obtained?

SERGET. But nobody knows the price it cost!

BARTLETT. On our side they'd know . . .

SERGET. Ah, les Anglo-Saxons!

BARTLETT. Really, gentlemen, you confuse me; you put me to shame. . . . I have never heard so much good said of the Anglo-Saxons as I have heard since my arrival in France . . . even in their own land—and goodness knows they don't forget themselves when it comes to the distribution of prizes!

HUSSON. We know now how to do justice to the virtues of others.

SERGET. We are no longer naïve enough to be conceited. . . . We are beginning to travel and to make comparisons.

PIERRE. We still possess a certain national pride, all the same, but in another way . . .

Here a violent skirmish follows between Pierre and Gontier—the two brothers—concerning their respective political opinions. Pierre is the mayor of the village and a Moderate Republican; but Gontier is a Royalist, and violently "agin the Government." Because of her form of government he abhors, he abuses France herself, though he would not allow any one else to do likewise.

HUSSON. (*Picking up the* Intransigeant.) Oh, Monsieur Gontier, you a Royalist, and you read this rag!

GONTIER. But it is the most reliable of all of them. . . . And the proof is that it was the first to be courageous enough to publish the truth about the infamy of the Government. . . . Listen, (*he reads out loud*) "The Prime Minister has received a bribe from abroad of several millions of money." . . .

PIERRE. (*To his brother, smiling.*) Don't you understand that that is the paper's delicate way of indicating that the

Government is upholding some measure to which the paper itself is hostile?

BARTLETT. Well, if a paper put things in that manner in America, it would be condemned to pay twenty thousand dollars if it could not prove the truth of its assertion.

PIERRE. (*To* GONTIER.) You really should not believe all that the papers say.

GONTIER. (*To* PIERRE.) My dear fellow, when they are against the Government I always believe them implicitly.

HUSSON. And there are a good many of us like you in that respect.

GONTIER. Well! each new fault, each new crime the Government commits, simply delights me. . . . I rub my hands with glee, and say to myself, 'All the better! All the better!' They can't make enough mistakes to please me. . . . For the more mistakes they make, the sooner will come the end of all this corruption.

PIERRE. (*Simply.*) I beg your pardon. . . . Did you say 'corruption'? . . .

GONTIER. Yes, I say the 'corruption of the Republic' . . .

HUSSON. It is no greater than the corruption under royalty . . .

GONTIER. I beg your pardon . . .

HUSSON. Or under the Empire.

GONTIER. Sir! . . .

SERGET. No, sir, I maintain what I say.

BARTLETT. (*Astonished, to* PIERRE.) What's the matter now?

PIERRE. They are quarrelling because they cannot agree as to the time when bribery and corruption were at their height in their own country . . .

BARTLETT. One must really admit that the French leave nothing for their enemies to say against them!

GONTIER. (*Continuing in a furious temper.*) The country is in the mire, I tell you. In the mire up to its neck! . . . In ten years there will be no more discipline in France at

all. . . . No more riches, nothing. . . . Nothing but vice and misery.

PIERRE. (*Tranquilly.*) Nevertheless, dear Mr. Bartlett, you could see—if only through the windows of your railway carriage—that there are still factories in full activity, and fine lands covered with crops, and people who appear neither vicious nor starved in France. . . . I assure you, Philip, (*turning to his brother*) that there is still a very large part of the country which has not fallen into the mire. You do not know the harm you do your own country by your continual disparagement of it . . .

GONTIER. I am not disparaging the country itself but its Government . . .

PIERRE. Yes, there's a subtle difference. . . . You are like the son of a first husband who disparages his mother's second husband. You aim at him, but you strike her. And the neighbours who are anxiously listening to your family quarrels beyond the boundaries are taking in all you say, and believing it. And that's why they get arrogant.

GONTIER. I should know how to defend my own country . . .

PIERRE. It would be far better if you never let it get attacked.

These last remarks resume all there is to say upon the matter. There can be no greater evil said of the French people than they are continually saying against themselves.

Later on, Bartlett, who is staying in the house with the Gontiers, believing — according to all the French novels he has read, and according to the manner in which he has been received by ladies of a certain class of morals

in Paris—that he is free to make love to any French lady he meets who appeals to his fancy, tries to kiss Marthe when he is alone with her. She of course proudly and firmly puts him back into his place with unequivocal displeasure.

BARTLETT. (*Naïvely astonished.*) I am indeed dumbfounded! . . . I can't understand it at all! I don't know what to believe or whose word to take! . . . For the last ten years I have read French novels, out in America, which describe what I take to be French customs. . . . In every one of them the heroine is unfaithful to her husband. . . . I land at Trouville in the height of the season, and there I witness most wondrously improper ways. . . . I go to Paris. . . . And for four consecutive evenings at the theatre I see plays in which the heroines behave in the same way. And then the women I met in Paris! . . . Oh, Lord! . . .

MARTHE. Well, sir, you must judge French women, neither by French novels, nor by French plays, nor by the ladies of the Moulin Rouge who so kindly invited you to their own homes in Paris. And as it seems necessary to have to explain this to you—notwithstanding all you have read—let me tell you—you know nothing whatever either of the literature or of the women of this country. Neither can you judge the men by their self-disparaging political discussions. . . . If France were to be judged thus, there would be no more honour left in the country at all, and it would be peopled with scoundrels and lost women only. . . . But, please do not make that mistake. There are still honest men in France, and honest women too, who make up the sum of all those you have not seen—that is to say, by far the larger majority. They are all those women who live only for their husbands and children—in their own homes, where you never penetrate. . . . They are those that you,

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and other foreigners like you, never meet; neither on the boulevards, nor in the cafés-concerts, nor in any of those public places of amusement and of debauchery of which you foreigners are the exclusive patrons. . . .

BARTLETT. I beg your pardon. . . . I do not understand. . . . You are indeed a strange nation of boasters and braggarts. Yes, you exhibit all your faults flagrantly, and you hypocritically hide your real qualities. . . . So when one does not know how to observe you, one takes you at your own word. . . . And evidently one makes great mistakes. . . .

Poor Bartlett is so miserable at his behaviour and so truly repentant that Marthe ultimately forgives him, telling him to go and sin no more; and the second act of the play ends here.

In the third act, Pierre, who has consulted his wife about his business, has taken her advice, and has decided to speak to Bartlett about his difficulties. Bartlett, who believes in Pierre's discovery, advises him to come and exploit it in America; but Pierre hesitates to expatriate himself and family.

BARTLETT. The French are like trees—rooted in their own soil. . . . That is the main fault of your wonderful country, with its temperate, tranquil, and charming climate. They called it the 'pleasant land' even in the time of the Romans.

PIERRE. But I am nearly fifty years old . . . too old to begin life again.

BARTLETT. At that age, with us, many start out on a new and successful career.

The Character of the French

The business conversation which follows is a conflict between the French and the American point of view, the philosophy of which tends to prove what has been said on a preceding page, namely, that in France the energy of the country is employed in preserving and keeping what is already in hand, rather than in making new efforts in the hope of gaining wider possessions.

Before leaving this charming play, I think it interesting to quote another scene between Charles, his cousin Geneviève, Bartlett, and Roquelot, a country labourer.

CHARLES. (*Teasingly, and speaking to* GENEVIÈVE.) I have been looking at Roquelot working at his flowerpot agriculture. . . .

ROQUELOT. (*Angrily.*) Flowerpot agriculture indeed . . . ! *Stupide Angliche !*

CHARLES. (*Continuing and trying not to laugh.*) And I am astonished to learn that he has never heard of the machine for transplanting green peas. . . .

ROQUELOT. (*Getting into a temper.*) The machine. . . . The machine. . . . Does your machine? . . . (*Curbing in his spirit.*) No, I'd rather not say anything.

GENEVIÈVE. How disagreeable you are to-day, Père Roquelot!

ROQUELOT. You see, Mademoiselle Geneviève, this is how it is. . . . I'm in a temper now, but. . . . Look here . . . if you were pulling up your potatoes, planting your cabbages, tying up your lettuces—in fact, doing your work properly as it should be done—would you allow any one to come and plague you all the time? . . .

GENEVIÈVE. No, certainly . . .

ROQUELOT. Do I try to worry him about America?

CHARLES. Ah, you see! You are beginning. . . .

ROQUELOT. Do you think I can stand monsieur's teasing when he starts telling me—merely to make fun of me—that in his country the parsley fields are as big as whole provinces in France, and that I make him laugh when I bore small holes in the ground to plant small blades of grass, in small flower-beds, in my small garden. . . .

CHARLES. (*Interrupting him, and still smiling and teasing.*) With three small drops of water to pour on each small plant. . . .

ROQUELOT. (*Threatening him, and looking at him with scorn.*) Three small drops of water! Yes, just three drops and no more! And what else have you to say?

CHARLES. Have a cigar? (*Offering his case.*)

ROQUELOT. Monsieur offers me a cigar as large as a leek and says that that is about the size of the parsley stalks in his country, and that a labourer out there can work ten machines at a time while he twiddles his thumbs. . . . And what do you think he calls us labourers over here? . . .

GENEVIÈVE. (*Smiling.*) I can't say.

ROQUELOT. You couldn't imagine it! He called us all *ants!*

CHARLES. (*To* BARTLETT.) Doesn't it seem to you, Bartlett, that the peasants here always seem to be engaged in preparing a doll's dinner? . . .

ROQUELOT. Doll's dinner indeed! . . .

CHARLES. (*Not heeding the interruption.*) . . . without giving themselves any unnecessary trouble. . . . Just quietly . . . gently . . . devotedly. . . .

ROQUELOT. (*Still furious.*) What do you mean by that?

BARTLETT. He means that you are a happy people without giving yourselves much trouble over the matter.

ROQUELOT. (*To* GENEVIÈVE.) Well, doesn't it make your blood boil to hear such things? . . . (*Turning to* CHARLES.)

And all that you can see yonder on the hill slopes. . . . Look at that. . . . Do you think we grew it all without any trouble?

CHARLES. What have you got on your slopes?

ROQUELOT. Grape vines. You perhaps don't know that one year all our grapes got ill and died, and by degrees we had to sell everything we possessed—bit by bit—to buy bread—and all the country around was ruined. . . . I am only a day labourer now, but I was a landlord before, and had money to burn in those days.

BARTLETT. And yet you let your vine-yards perish?

ROQUELOT. (*Indignant.*) Let them perish indeed! Fancy saying such a thing!

BARTLETT. I don't know, I am asking you.

ROQUELOT. Let our vine-yards perish! But they were our sole source of revenue, our unique property, and we tried everything—everything we could think of—even to Catholic processions through the streets and prayers to demons and sorcerers. . . . We had come to believing in any tom-foolery. . . .

CHARLES. And what about sulpho-carbonic-acid?

ROQUELOT. Ah, yes, good Lord! Sulpho-carbonic-acid! . . . Why, we put the filthy stuff on our good strong vines. . . . It broke our very hearts to water each stem with it. But it was no good. We had to root up all our plants one by one. . . . Yes! root up all the vines which had fed us from father to son for so many generations. . . . We pulled them all out and put in fresh ones; but before they could yield us a single grape, we had to wait patiently years and years, with our arms crossed and our stomachs empty. . . . Ah! if it hadn't been for the missus, I'd have done as so many others did.

CHARLES. What?

ROQUELOT. More than one of us was found hanged in his own empty cellar. Luckily my missus had pluck enough for the two of us! Ah! I know all that you can say. . . . Before, when the vines were fruitful, we took life too gaily and gave ourselves a good time. Perhaps we did—but afterwards . . .

I can swear to you that our vine-labourers were anything but idle. I doubt whether all the Yankees and English in creation could have shown more pluck than we did—even if we are ants. . . . (*He picks up the handle of his barrow and begins wheeling it before him.*) Now I'm off to transplant my salsifies, while the machine for making babies without fathers and mothers is being invented. . . .

CHARLES. Père Roquelot, I promise you I'll never make fun of you again. Let's shake hands. . . .

BARTLETT. I must have a bit of a talk with you, Père Roquelot, later. . . . You can teach me many things I don't know. So now you're well pleased with the vines. . . .

ROQUELOT. (*Going off.*) Yes, pretty well. . . . But now it's the dead sales that balk one. . . .

CHARLES. And these are the people Monsieur Serget said had no energy.

GENEVIÈVE. Monsieur Serget lives in Paris . . . and the Parisians never know what is really happening in France. . .

Later on, when Charles, who has fallen in love with his cousin Geneviève, wants to marry her and settle in France, Bartlett opposes his decision. But Charles has grown to love France, and to feel his French blood rising in him. Bartlett in vain uses every argument to dissuade him.

BARTLETT. You have only to listen to what French people say of themselves to judge the country.

CHARLES. You judge France by what the French say, and the French by what the Parisians say, and the Parisians by what the Boulevardiers say. . . . Why! the great fault of France to-day is her want of belief in herself. . . . But I say that when a country, after a blow like the war of '70, finds in itself the necessary energy to recuperate its forces, and the

high courage that was necessary later to pay the milliards over the phylloxera—one has not the right to speak of its degeneracy—unless one is either totally blind or a determined enemy. . . . France has remained too long in a state of convalescence. The whole country is like a man who, having lost faith in himself, needs a friend to tap him on the shoulder, to tell him to pull himself together and be conscious of his own qualities—which are not necessarily those of which he may boast—so as to make him understand the strength of his own honesty and greatness. . . . France is above all the country where ideas are born.

BARTLETT. But where they are not realized. . . .

CHARLES. It is rarer to have ideas than to realize those of others. Ideas cannot be born without effervescence, agitation, conflict. Immobility is the apprenticeship of death. . . . It is here in France, even in the midst of peace, where the races of the North and South come into contact. . . . Wherever two rivers meet, join and mix together, there is always a whirlpool. If one is near-sighted or prejudiced, one will see only the whirlpool, and will not notice that, farther on, the river resumes its course more calmly and more powerfully than before. . . . The French are a turbulent people . . . and for two whole centuries have troubled Europe. But all the generous ideas which have ever advanced modern humanity have sprung from their agitated brains. And then there is their culture and their taste. . . . Do you know what I once heard an American say? 'If one could build a wall around France so as to isolate it completely, and a similar wall around the United States, and if, after fifty years, one were to look over the wall to see how the two countries were getting on, one would find that France had progressed in advance of modern civilisation, while in the States we should find nothing else but redskins and niggers.'

BARTLETT. (*Angrily.*) That's enough, I don't want to hear any more. The man who said that was a bad citizen.

CHARLES. A man is always wrong when he disparages his own country.

BARTLETT. And I say that my country will grow greater and greater, while France, in ten years' time . . .

GONTIER. (*Interrupting him.*) Really, Bartlett. . . .

BARTLETT. (*Continuing.*) . . . while France in ten years will be in the mire. . . .

GONTIER. (*In a temper.*) Ah, Bartlett, you'd better be careful.

BARTLETT. (*Astonished.*) Well! what's the matter? I am only repeating your own words. . . .

GONTIER. I may say such things myself, but I won't allow anybody else to say them! . . . We may make such declarations when we are between ourselves, but we all know that when we talk politics, we talk nonsense. . . .

There is yet another scene in the play, right at the end, which I think necessary to quote here, as it points a moral and adorns my tale concerning the Frenchwoman, to whom I have devoted a chapter farther on in this volume. The Frenchwoman is most unjustly reproached with frivolity by the women of other nations; and the manner in which Marthe Gontier puts the too enterprising Bartlett back into his place, and her reasons and explanations concerning her own attitude, are very indicative of the normal Frenchwoman's attitude under the same circumstances. She has long forgiven Bartlett for his bad behaviour, and they are planning together like two old friends over her husband's business affairs. She has confided to Bartlett that Pierre is on the verge of disaster. Even her own fortune—her *dot*—has been sacrificed to fill up the gaps made

in his own. Now they are reduced to living in quite poor circumstances.

BARTLETT. I must say I don't see you in a small dark flat without light or air . . . surrounded by plain, ugly furniture. . . . Why, you'd die of ennui. . . .

MARTHE. You're wrong there. . . . The small, dark flat is quite unnecessary. . . . By living a little out of the centre, on a top floor, one can secure light and air cheaply enough; and if one's vanity or snobbishness is hurt, one can tell all one's fine friends that the locality has been recommended by the doctors, as more healthy for the children. . . . As for the furniture . . . why! if you only knew how cheaply one can manage to be luxurious. With Indian cotton draperies on the walls and a length of Liberty silk draped around the mirror. . . . And if you knew how easily one can purchase cheap flower-vases in the Paris shops to hold a twopenny bunch of mimosa, which would look like a real *objet d'art* in your Chicago drawing-rooms . . .

BARTLETT. Yes. . . . But when you have spent three hundred and sixty-five days each year in a continual *tête-à-tête*, the four of you together. . . . Do you know what will happen? Why! you'll get to hate the sight of one another. . . . Come with me to America; that's the thing to do. . . .

MARTHE. A continual *tête-à-tête*. . . . But we shall go out, Monsieur Bartlett!

BARTLETT. And what will you do for gowns?

MARTHE. The making of our gowns always costs more than the material; and we possess the making of them at the tips of our own fingers.

BARTLETT. And diamonds?

MARTHE. (*Smiling.*) Oh, they have gone out of fashion now. . . . And besides, one can get such good imitations. When you contemplate a smart audience in a Paris theatre you do not realize, Monsieur Bartlett, what skill and ingenuity many women spectators in the house have displayed, before they

have come to their seats there. Many a one—I can assure you—is wearing a gown into which she has just put the last stitch with her own fingers but an hour before the rise of the curtain. . . . The husband, on his return from business, has found clean linen ready for him and his evening coat far better brushed than any valet could have done—even the collar stud has been placed in the top buttonhole so as to avoid the inevitable storm. . . . The white gloves are fresh and clean; they have been cleaned and mended by the very hands that wear them; but you could not imagine it, seeing her so smart and cheerful, with false diamonds and pearls perhaps on her corsage, but which, on her, look real, even if genuine brilliants seem of a doubtful quality on other bosoms. . . . The next morning, she puts on old gloves to help the servant or the charwoman to do the housework. . . . And she finds such conduct quite natural, and is bright and cheerful through it all, without imagining herself to be heroic; because in her blood she has natural courage and cheerfulness. Such is the secret of happiness without fortune, Monsieur Bartlett.

BARTLETT. Why don't you tell us all this in your novels?

MARTHE. Why! you would not buy them if we did. . . .

BARTLETT. That's one to me. . . . (*After a pause, and referring to the incident wherein he so misbehaved himself.*) Now that we are good friends again, don't you think you were really just a little bit . . . flirtatious with me?

MARTHE. (*Quite candidly.*) Of course I was! And it was quite natural that I should be. . . . As soon as I knew that the Atlantic was about to bring us a man who could help my husband out of his difficulties, I said to myself, 'I must not frighten that excellent fellow away. . . .' After all, 'We defend our own men as best we can,' Monsieur Bartlett—as the working girls say. . . . I admit that I coquetted with you . . . (*smiling*) but it was with an honourable purpose. . . .

Which proves that the Frenchwoman is not only her husband's business partner, but uses her most feminine weapons in his interest also!

II

MATCHMAKING

In Anglo-Saxon countries, the general opinion seems to be that marriage in France is but a mere business arrangement. This is one of those rather too sweeping opinions which, like others of its kind, holds but a part of the real truth. It is quite certain, however, that those French girls who possess no dowry at all cannot expect to marry well—in fact, may rarely expect to marry at all—for the very principle upon which a union is based in France exists in the fact that the two contracting parties must possess incomes that are similar, although the woman may often have a little less than the man. Sometimes, however, she may be required to have more, if the man's career promises to be very brilliant and successful. But this does not mean that every Frenchman is a fortune-hunter. Of course, there are many whose sole aim in marrying is to secure a fortune as well as a wife. But these are

truly the exception. For these questions are questions of degree, and one can hardly call a man a fortune-hunter if he seeks in marriage a woman who has a dowry in proportion to his own income—that is to say, who has sufficient money of her own to bear her own personal expenses in the community. This is in reality what the average Frenchman seeks with his bride. His practical common sense forces him to realize that one cannot live upon kisses alone. He is not at all an improvident person, and when he starts in life and founds a family, he wants to feel comparatively certain of being able to maintain his home upon its proper basis. It must be remembered, too, that the Frenchman has little or no taste for speculation, and lacks the magnificent recklessness which is forcibly inherent in the man who is willing to take risks. On the other hand—and for this very reason—one rarely hears in France of the great financial upheavals or of the sudden calamities which happen so often to the business man of a more adventurous temperament. The Frenchman if less enterprising, is more cautious. He likes to be sure of his income before accepting new responsibilities, and that is why he prefers reliable, steady, though underpaid employment in State offices, or in large well-poised adminis-

trations which offer him a regular though limited income, to which a small pension is attached, but upon which it would be practically impossible to maintain a wife and family entirely. Hence the necessity of a dowry settled upon the wife, which affords a guarantee to the husband that, should he die suddenly, his widow and family will not be left entirely penniless.

It may be said—and with truth—that this very French quality of economic prudence has its corresponding defect, for often it neutralizes a wholesome personal initiative and discourages the spirit of individual enterprise which is so admirable a characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon races, giving them their preponderant strength in the commercial world.

Though this small but secure income keeps him in a mediocre monetary position all his life, the Frenchman's qualities of thrift and self-denial are very great, and by the very careful balancing of his accounts he not only manages to make both ends meet, but—incredible though it would seem to an Englishman or American who would have to live upon the same limited income—puts money by also, for he knows that later on he will have to dower his daughters and start his sons in their careers with a little money. So, above all other qualities, he seeks to find in

his life partner a similar sense of economy and pruden foresight, and also a strict practical knowledge of house-management.

In the lower middle classes, in those cases where fathers can offer but the smallest of dowries —often only just sufficient to buy the *trousseau* and house-linen, which in France is far more plentiful than in corresponding families of Anglo-Saxon lands—the girls of a family are often given a technical education which enables them to earn their own living. When they marry they do not give up their work, so that the income thus earned by a young wife represents an important contribution to the household budget of the new *ménage* and stands in lieu of a dowry. Frenchwomen of this class are notoriously industrious and efficient. They make excellent business-women, and large numbers of them, especially in Paris, are employed in commercial houses of all kinds, more especially in the dressmaking and millinery establishments and in all those businesses connected with the *métiers de luxe* that abound in France. These are almost a national institution, for they provide the fashionable feminine luxuries that are exported all over the world, and they are almost entirely managed and 'run' by Parisiennes of the *petite bourgeoisie*.

Matchmaking

The French wife prefers to work if she has no dowry rather than to live upon her husband's generosity. She will not allow him to support the entire expenses of the household, for she has a fine spirit and insists upon her own economical independence, whether it comes from her own private income or whether it be the wage of her own efforts.

In many cases the business salary of the wife exceeds that of the husband. I know many women who earn large salaries of four, five, and six hundred pounds a year in business establishments whose husbands earn far less. One woman of my acquaintance owns a large important business house where blouses, petticoats, and lingerie articles are made for exportation, which yields her an income of about two thousand pounds a year. Her own husband is employed in the cashier's department at an annual salary of two or three thousand francs!

The type of woman who knows little or nothing concerning her husband's business affairs and who is content to receive a weekly wage from her husband to cover the household expenses and her own does not exist in France. The French wife is not only her husband's confidante, but is essentially a co-worker and partner, sharing all his interests both in business and private affairs.

In the lower middle classes marriages are often arranged on a somewhat different basis to those of the upper *bourgeoisie*, for many young people meet as co-workers, and when they marry each continues to work as before. Servants, for instance, often marry and yet remain in service either together or separately. As a rule such *ménages* try to get a situation together, the man serving as *valet de chambre* and the woman as cook or maid.

The advantages of the dowry system are numerous from the woman's moral point of view, as well as from the more practical standpoint. It gives the wife a certain personal independence in the *ménage* that makes her a power with which her husband must reckon. It has another advantage too. Although French law, within certain limits, recognizes the husband's rights to administer the revenues of the wife's dowry, custom gives the woman the practical management of her own income. This enables her to acquire a certain sense of personal responsibility and develops sound business principles in her—for she is obliged to manage, and to contrive her own expenses and to balance her personal budget alone. It is very rare that the husband gives his wife any allowance, so her personal independence with regard to financial affairs gives her a sense

of individual freedom that places her in a position of equality with her husband. Owing nothing to her husband's generosity, she is less subservient to him and more of a comrade and helper. When the husband owns a business house it often happens that the wife invests the capital of her dowry in the husband's business, but she draws the income from it regularly, as if she were an ordinary partner. Often again it may be employed by mutual consent to build a home for the family, to buy a doctor's, notary's, or *avoué's* practice, or is used as the *cautionnement* exacted by the State from all Inland Revenue officers; but to whatever uses it may be put the income of it is always considered the wife's property.

Speaking generally, it may be said that marriages in France are rather affairs of reason than of impulse or sentiment, although of course there exist many *mariages d'inclination*, as love-matches are called here. It would be interesting to compare the systems of marriage in France and in Anglo-Saxon countries, where marriages are presumably based upon pure love alone, and indeed often seem to be contracted on a deplorable principle appearing to establish the following axiom: 'What is an insufficient income for one person is ample for two!'

The very basis for a marriage in France is 'reason,' and it is usually the friends and relations of the two contracting parties who bring them together with matrimonial intentions. Now, the friends and relations who set about this first of all consider the tastes and inclinations, religious and otherwise, of the two candidates for matrimony, as well as their financial and social positions. There is, therefore, some reason to suppose that if the parties decide to marry they at least will not disagree upon fundamental questions. The young people of England and America, on the contrary, are brought together in what would be considered in France as a somewhat haphazard fashion, and are mainly drawn one towards the other by youthful impulse based upon physical attraction—though they may not realize this themselves at the time. Thus it often happens that a man and a young girl marry who have totally different trainings, instincts, and tastes. It is, therefore, not astonishing that when their ardour is spent they sometimes find that they are total strangers.

Both systems have their merits, and are probably each well suited to the temperament of the nation in which they are customary. I am not prepared to defend one more than the

other. I am merely stating what is the case in ninety-nine per cent. of the marriages in Latin countries like France and Italy, as compared to the methods of marriage-making in Anglo-Saxon lands like England and America.

But it must be remembered, too, that in France, marriage is not only a bond between two individuals; it is more than that. It is a contract between two families—one might even say, considering what the French family spirit is, that it is a contract between two clans. For the link created between two families by means of a marriage is a very strong one, the honour and the good name of the one reflecting largely upon the honour and good name of the other, and each family considering it their duty—within limits—to defend the traditions of the other. That is one of the reasons—and an important reason, though not the principal one—why parents and grandparents, and indeed all influential relations, have so preponderant a voice upon the subject of young people's choice. Marriage in France is not regarded so much as an individual or personal matter concerning the contracting parties alone, as it is considered a family matter, and, within the circle of the two uniting families, as a matter of great social importance.

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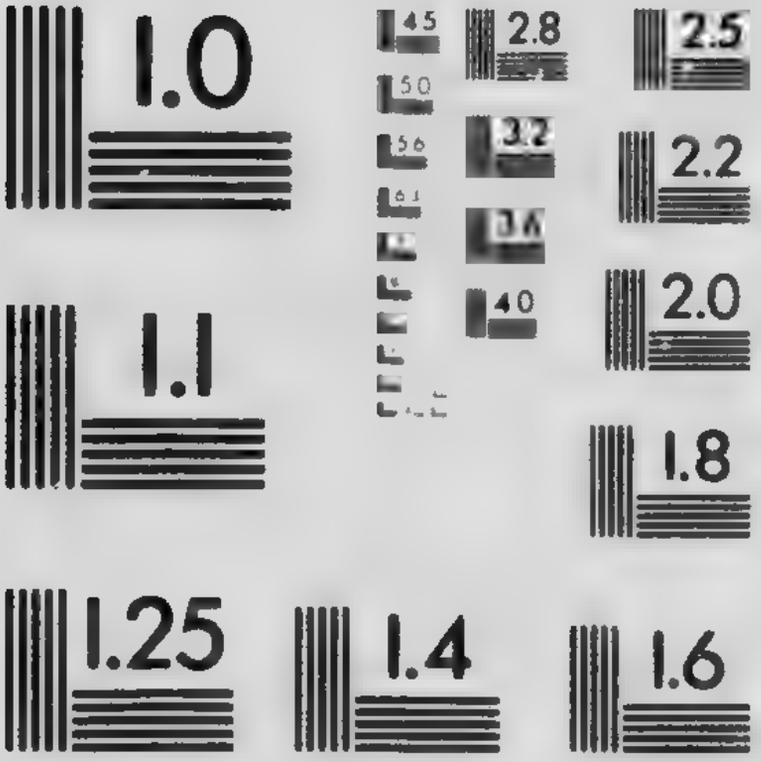

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At a very recent wedding I heard the old white-haired grandfather of the bride—he himself was an important member of the Senate House—thus accost the grey-pated grandfather of the bridegroom—he was a famous writer: 'You have done us a great honour this day, *cher maître*.' For, in the appreciation of the old Frenchman, the marriage of their descendants had cemented a bond between the two families. And, from their point of view, that was the most interesting result of the day's ceremony.

As the attitude of young French people towards marriage differs so essentially from the attitude of young people of other lands, so does their preparation for marriage entirely differ. The education of the young Englishman, for instance, consists largely in sport and in outdoor games of all kinds. He is not much interested in the opposite sex, until he meets some young friend of his sister or of his other relations, and her youth calling to his youth, love is born. And after love comes marriage.

Now the young Frenchman, whose best friend, companion, and confidant is his mother, is interested in the *éternel féminin* from his babyhood upwards. And it would seem that he is ever seeking the mother-soul in all the women he ultimately meets. He is not

allowed to mix with young girls, but he has many friendships and often love-affairs with women of all classes, long before he begins to consider matrimony. Generally, also, he is far too much interested in his own career and personal ambitions to think of marriage until his financial and social position is well assured, and it must be remembered that it is the position he has attained in his career which will justify his demanding a *dot* of some importance with his wife. He does not, like the young Englishman of the *bourgeoisie*, fall in love with a young girl of his own class, get engaged to her, and then keep her waiting sometimes for years while he makes a home for her. The young Frenchman, on the contrary, begins by making the home or establishing the possibility of one, before he begins to look out for the girl, and, as the old French traditions forbid any intercourse between young men and unmarried women—although one is bound to admit that with the new and more independent generation of French girls these older traditions are fast disappearing — he begs one of his female relations or an old family friend to seek a *fiancée* for him.

This the lady proceeds to do without delay, inquiring right and left among her acquaintances,

with what would appear, in English or American eyes, to be a total lack of reserve, into the position, character, dowry, and expectations of those of her young friends and acquaintances whose family and social position meet with the young man's requirements. When a satisfactory candidate is found, some formal kind of entertainment is then decided upon, and the two young people are brought together for the first time. Very often neither of them is aware of the importance of the interview; sometimes it is only the young girl who is left in ignorance, for reasons easy to understand. The young people are allowed very little conversation at this first interview. A favourite place for arranging a first meeting is a box at a theatre. Now in Paris the only theatre which young girls are allowed to visit is the Opéra Comique, where *Mignon* or some such mild opera may be heard. And so well-known a meeting-place for intending *fiancés* is this, that there is a favourite joke in Paris concerning it, and if you happen to mention to any Parisian acquaintance that you are about to pay a visit to the Opéra Comique, you will find that the information is generally received with a knowing half smile, and the question immediately follows; '*Est-ce pour un mariage?*'

Matchmaking

I need hardly say that the young French girl is prepared for marriage on totally different lines to the young Frenchman. From her earliest years she is taught that marriage is the be-all and end-all of a girl's existence. Having always been carefully excluded from the society of young men, when she dreams of love it is always in the presentment of a young and passionate husband, and as she has no occasion to have any love-affairs, her one love-affair is of course her own marriage—and a very serious one it is to her, I can assure you. Even after she is engaged, she is allowed none of the freedom of the young Anglo-Saxon girl, and love-making never begins before the knot is securely tied between the young *conjoints*.

English and Americans might be apt to consider that this love-making to order is without charm and without romance, but if one considers the education of the youth of both sexes in France, one understands that their attitude towards marriage must necessarily be totally different to that of young people in those countries where there is complete freedom between the sexes. If in these countries love precedes marriage, in France it follows marriage —which is more easy to understand than Anglo-Saxons generally suppose. For the young

Frenchman, surfeited with illicit love-affairs, welcomes the fresh pure charm of his young and unsophisticated *fiancée*, while she, who has long dreamt of and awaited the love that has been denied her, suddenly finding herself confronted with a most *empressé* lover-husband, promptly falls headlong in love with him.

After all, all the world over, is not the lover in love with love, rather than with one special human being? And if both the Latin and Anglo-Saxon systems arrive at the same conclusion, one must admit that the French method, if less sentimental, is perhaps the more prudent, for the candidates on both sides having first been carefully 'sifted' by cautious friends and families, it limits the young and inexperienced to a safer choice.

I have known hundreds of cases of such marriages of reason. In my own family one was engineered under my very eyes some years ago. A cousin of mine, a young man of about thirty, who held one of those high posts in the French State Administration that are usually the lot of those favoured *fils de famille* who rejoice in the possession of many *protections*, had come to resolve that it was high time for him to get married. He considered himself a good *parti*, holding a post which ensured him a cer-

tain social position. He was provided with influential relations, was strong, healthy, and not bad-looking, and he thought that there ought to be plenty of young women of the upper *bourgeoisie* provided with adequate dowries and expectations who ought to be only too happy to get him. He lived at home with his father, a widower, and they had a large circle of friends whom they often entertained. One day at a luncheon party at his father's house, my cousin mentioned openly and frankly the fact that he would like to get married, and turning to one of his special friends at table, a young married man, he said to him laughingly: 'I wish you would try and find me a nice wife.'

'Certainly,' came the immediate answer; 'what dowry do you require?'

'What dowry do you think I am entitled to demand?' he asked. 'You see, I do not wish to marry to secure a large fortune; I only want my wife to have an income about equal to my own, or perhaps a little more.' And he proceeded to explain to his friend that the post he held in the State offices entitled him to a social position that made him a prize in the marriage market.

A few days later his friend came in to lunch again and said:

'My dear boy, I think I have got what you want.'

Thereupon my cousin and his father sat down and began to listen to what the other had to say.

'She is the daughter of a *grand industriel*,' he began, 'is nineteen years old, and has just left her convent school; has a dowry of 350,000 francs [£1,400], which, well invested in her father's business, brings in an annual revenue of 14,000 francs [£560]. She is an only child, and after her father's death will inherit about five millions of francs. Now, as your own revenue amounts at present to about 12,000 francs a year, and will of course increase considerably, I think your fortunes are about equal, considering the position you can give her in Parisian society.'

The whole of this conversation took place quite frankly before me and the other persons who were present, and who were not in the least astonished at hearing a possible marriage thus frankly discussed.

My uncle and cousin agreed, upon their friend's suggestion, to open negotiations. Thereupon it was decided that at a dinner-party given the following week at the house of the friend who was the intermediary, my uncle alone would be invited to meet the parents of the young girl. Of course, these knew all about

the mutual friend's negotiations, but it was decided that the young people should not meet until the parents had become acquainted. After the dinner had taken place, the parents of the young girl — who herself so far was entirely ignorant of the proceedings — invited my uncle and his son to dinner at their house together with the friends who were 'making the marriage.' When the evening of the presentation arrived, the young man was of course *au courant*, but nothing had been said to the young girl. It was almost the first time that she had appeared at one of the big dinner-parties given by her parents. There were about twelve people at this gathering and she was placed at the end of the table, next to my cousin. During the dinner their conversation was of the most *banal* description, my cousin's one fear being to frighten the young lady, who had only recently left her convent, and who was presumably quite innocent and ignorant of the world and very, very shy. (He had been most careful to ask me, before he left for the party, what subjects of conversation appealed more specially to *jeunes filles!*)

When my cousin returned with his father to their home that evening, my uncle inquired: 'Well, how do you like the young girl?'

'She pleases me,' *elle me plait*, he answered, in the usual formula. 'She seems young and fresh and unsophisticated, and certainly very reserved and gentle.'

'We are to dine with her and her people again next week at our mutual friend's,' said my uncle. 'You had better see her again before making up your mind.'

That same evening, the young girl's mother said to her, after the guests had gone: 'How did you like your young *cavalier* at table this evening, young Mr. X——?'

'I thought him very nice, mamma.'

'Well, try and please him, my dear, for he is looking out for a wife and would be an excellent *parti* for you. *Tache de faire sa conquête.*'

So a week later the young people met again, and after having exchanged a few words together in the course of the evening, when the party was over, each was again questioned by the parents. The young girl's mother took her apart in her room and said to her: 'My dear, young Mr. X——, whom you met again to-night, would like to marry you. He finds you to his taste.'

(It is important to note that the word 'love' is never spoken before the young girl. She is told that she *pleases* a young man or that *h*·

finds her to his taste, and the girl herself knows quite well that love is only permissible after marriage.)

'Does he please you?' asked the mother.

'Yes,' answered the young girl, shyly casting down her eyes. (One wonders indeed, when French girls are allowed so limited a choice, how it is that one man can *please* her more than another!)

My cousin was informed of all the virtues the young girl possessed—besides of many which of course she did not possess—and he decided that she would suit him. He now begged the mutual friends to discuss all economical questions more definitely and more precisely, and, once this accomplished to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, begged his father to apply officially to the girl's father for the hand of his daughter. This gentleman replied that he would give a definite answer in two or three days' time, and it was decided that he would call to give his reply personally. When all these formalities were over my cousin was allowed to pay his court—that is to say, he gave a florist orders to deliver a bouquet of white flowers every morning at the house of his *fiancée*, and also was permitted to go to tea every afternoon at the house of her parents. But he was never

allowed to see the young girl alone during the whole time of the betrothal, which lasted exactly one month. Meanwhile, the *lingères*, *modistes* and *couturières* were hard at work for the intending bride, taking up all her real attention.

I must confess that once during this period I afforded the *fiancés* a clandestine private interview. For a few moments I was left alone with the young lady in a small *salon* at my uncle's house, while my uncle and cousin and the parents of the girl were examining some pictures in a larger *salon*. While we were alone together, my cousin, leaving the pictures, suddenly slipped furtively into the room we were in, and turning to me appealingly said:

'You *would* be a dear if you would leave us together alone for a few moments.'

Now I confess that my sympathy was entirely with the young engaged couple. I was just fresh from my English college and full of romantic ideas concerning engagements. I argued to myself that as they were to be married in a few days' time, I ought to take pity on them. So I quietly left the room and let them enjoy a few minutes' entire solitude—for which conduct, I need hardly say, I was thoroughly scolded by my uncle later!

When next I found myself alone with my cousin's *fiancée* I said to her:

'How did my cousin behave when I left him alone with you?'

She hung her head and, blushing, replied falteringly:

'He . . . he . . . kissed me.'

I looked at her with mock severity.

'Oh! you naughty girl!' I exclaimed. And the poor child was dissolved into tears.

Five days later they were married, my cousin addressing her as *mademoiselle* and she addressing him as *monsieur* until the law had actually made them man and wife.

But when they returned from their honeymoon six weeks later, the transformation of the chrysalid *jeune fille* into the blossoming *jeune femme* was complete. The timid young convent girl had already developed into a self-assertive domineering young woman, with all her wits about her, who even at this early date held her husband well in hand and showed that she was determined to manage him completely henceforth.

Which she did.

III

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

THOUGH the two contracting parties in a French marriage have rarely been brought together by simultaneous attraction, but through the efforts of prudent friends and relations, and urged mainly by stern reason, that does not prevent Love from claiming his rights, and the French couple is often most tenderly united after marriage, even though the fundamental basis of the union is set upon an ideal of practical and mutual interests. It is because the French husband does not court his wife before marriage that he courts her afterwards, and because the French girl has been allowed no love-affairs before the ceremony that she now has one—and a very serious one too—with her legal spouse. A witty Frenchman once ironically remarked that as a French girl cannot marry a man she loves, she manages to love the one she gets. This is, in a sense, quite true, even if—being a young and unsophisticated

creature—she is only in love with love itself; but is not this the case also with most maidens of all lands, when they become engaged to be married?

It is a curious fact, but it would almost seem that a common interest not only binds two people together more effectively than anything else in this land, but also appears to breed love, for what is certain is that the French marriage, founded primordially upon reason, becomes none the less truly and deeply affectionate. The French husband not only shows great devotion and tenderness, but will defend his wife against all and everybody, and will be ready even to fight duels right and left if necessary—exposing his own life each time, however absurd they may appear to uninitiated outsiders—with anybody who dares say a word against her. The French wife shows the same loyalty, and even, it has often been remarked, when two people are on bad terms with one another and have much to reproach one another with mutually, they yet both defend and uphold the dignity of the conjugal association. A Frenchwoman will never allow her husband to be abused or even discussed in her presence. Even when she happens to be on bad terms with him herself, she will allow

no one else to find fault with him. There is evidently a very strong tie in the fact of being tied together. I have often heard a Frenchwoman say of a man: 'He may not be worth much, perhaps, but he is my husband. . . . And I won't hear a word against him!' And she remains firmly loyal to him, even when she knows his defects and suffers because of them more than any one else.

A fine feeling of *camaraderie* thus binds two married people together, and provided there be no other rivals in the field, love may exist simultaneously with *camaraderie* and be strengthened by it. After all, are not *grandes passions* very rare in any land, and are not love-affairs mostly the result of propinquity in every country? Therefore, so long as the *femme fatale*, or her masculine counterpart, does not appear upon the horizon, there is little to be feared when both parties are so eagerly determined to be happy together. It certainly must be said, in the Frenchwoman's defence, that she generally has very little in common with the heroine of so many French romances—the French romancer always choosing exceptional cases to depict, and never describing the more ordinary everyday type of his nation, which are the rule.

Marriage and Divorce

The Frenchman has no better friend, counsellor, *confidente*, and comrade than his wife. She is even more than this: she has also for him the heart and soul of a business partner, not only actually taking intelligent interest in his outside affairs, but considering her own *ménage* itself as a business enterprise too, in which herself and her husband are responsible co-partners. She is conscious that each must uphold the dignity of the marital firm and defend it from all inquisitive outside interference. This particular attitude often continues to exist even when there have been grave dissensions between husband and wife on other grounds. I know of many French couples whose union exists solely upon this basis, which has thus existed for many years, even when reciprocal love and tenderness have long passed away. A considerate friendship and entire freedom and tolerance on both sides is the result, the real bond between them being that of the business firm.

Thus, just as the French family is a great force in French society, all the members of that one family being bound together with common interests against the whole world, so the French *ménage*, though it may no longer exist as a love association, is a strong social force.

The French wife is well trained to this broader outlook. She is an excellent business woman, from whatever class of society she may have sprung. Generally she herself, enjoying the management of her own personal income, represented either by her dowry or by her personal labour, has learned to understand money matters admirably, possessing all the qualities of a good administrator as well as those of an excellent housekeeper. It is these qualities that make of her so useful an ally in both professional and home affairs. Consequently, her husband never has any secrets from her and confides in her upon all matters, never concealing from her even the most trivial details concerning his business, trusting not only in her practical *flair*, but also relying instinctively upon her feminine intuition, for a Frenchman is a firm believer in the intuition of woman. He fully realizes its force, and considers it a strength to be relied upon. It must not be forgotten that at his best he possesses a great many feminine characteristics himself.

In all his love-affairs, at every age, a Frenchman is a very different man to an Englishman or an American. He is less dog-like in his attachment, and is inclined to treat love rather

as an agreeable and artistic pastime than as the really serious interest of life. Nevertheless, it *is* the more absorbing amusement of his life—in sections!—until the right woman, coming along, takes him in hand and manages him entirely. Then, and only then, is he quite happy in his conscious or unconscious subservience to her.

The Frenchwoman is primordially a mother, and after the first few months of marriage the maternal love goes largely to make up the feeling she has for her husband. At heart, a Frenchman is always a pathetic big baby, of which fact the Frenchwoman is ever aware—and she plays her part accordingly. From his earliest youth he is a 'mother's boy'; his heart is all tenderness for his *maman*, and when he has lost her, it may safely be said that he is like a lonely child, ever seeking the mother-love in the heart of the *éternel féminin*. It is through this almost exaggerated tenderness that the French wife holds the affections of her husband, treating him like a spoilt child, and humouring, scolding, petting or punishing him in turn. If to this treatment she adds her sterling sound common sense, business ability, social instinct, and moral courage—all of which qualities characterize her—it will easily be

understood how it is that she manages her husband so successfully. At no age is a Frenchwoman ever really subservient to a man, even if she may judge it expedient to pretend to appear so. When she is an old woman she does not turn for help or advice to her sons, as so many Englishwomen do, but always remains the guiding spirit for those whom she always calls her *petits*.

In her youth, maturity, and even old age, the French wife is always intensely feminine, and is always keenly alert to keep the attentions of her husband to herself, endeavouring to make herself as attractive as possible at all times, both inside the home and out of it. Thus she puts to real practical use her deep instinctive knowledge of elegance in dress, neglecting not the smallest details. As she has not been allowed to hunt for her own husband when a *jeune fille*, she puts forth all her powers of attraction when she has become a wife, so as to retain her husband as a lover as long as she can.

The French husband is himself greatly interested in his wife and in all her own personal interests, not the least of which is her dress. Often he will accompany his spouse to her *séances* at the dressmaker's or at the *modiste's*,

AT THE MILLINER'S.
From the painting by E. Waite.

giving his valuable advice as to the style or fit of new hats and gowns. He thoroughly appreciates the efforts his wife makes to appear charming in his eyes, and helps her towards this end to the best of his ability. He likes her to be *élégante* above all—and in the French sense this term indicates the possession of a delicate sense of what is tasteful and refined, though not necessarily rich or costly. A true *élégante* must show a minute attention to details and must be *soignée* in each of these.

As the standard of elegance in a hyper-civilized city like modern Paris implies a certain artifice of detail, the Parisienne's standard of beauty necessarily demands a certain artificiality. The use of face-powder and cosmetics is not discouraged by French husbands, provided they be not grossly or inartistically used. Indeed, face-powder has come to be considered so intrinsic a part of a smart Parisienne's outfit that her husband would consider her toilette as unachieved without it as if she omitted to put on a veil when going out of doors. But the Parisienne of good education employs these artifices with great discrimination. She may emphasize her own 'points' artificially, but will not seek to assume any colour or tint that Nature has not endowed

her with primordially. She will carefully study the natural tones of her own complexion before attempting to apply any alien colour. She will conscientiously seek to discern her own limitations, and once having fully realized them, she will keep well within them when applying cosmetics. The legitimate use of these, she considers, is but a question of degree, for women who avowedly make a daily use of face-powder and coloured lip-salve are often the first to accuse others of the heinous crime of 'making up' their faces. But often those who 'make up' have employed no other artificial aid to their toilette than the very women who condemn them. Only they have used them more lavishly, less restrainedly—hence inartistically, hence criminally, in the judgment of their more fastidious sisters!

The Parisian lady therefore leaves to Montmartroises, to *demi-mondaines*, and also even to the women of foreign lands, the thick face-coatings of startling reds and whites that could be scraped off with a palette-knife, and which have been assumed not because they are capable in any way of '*réparer des ans, l'irréparable outrage*,' but merely because they please the wearer's fancy!

When they are among the women of

their own class, Frenchwomen are quite frank concerning their use of cosmetics. Even in restaurants one will see them pull out their powder-puffs before all present and refresh their cheeks with a little powder. I shall never forget the consternation of some English visitors at Aix-les-Bains some years ago, when the great famous beauty—Madame Gauthrot—was staying there with her husband. Dining at one of the small flower-laden tables of the Villa des Fleurs with a party of friends, towards the end of the dinner Madame Gauthrot would turn to her husband and say :

'*Pierre, ma poudre, s'il vous plait.*'

And Pierre Gauthrot obediently would dive into the depths of his coat-tails and draw forth a small ivory powder-box.

'*Pierre, mon rouge, s'il vous plait.*'

And Pierre would dive into another pocket and bring forth a small tube of lip-salve. And lastly the request :

'*Pierre, mon miroir.*'

And then Pierre would hand his wife a small square pocket mirror, which she would tilt up against her champagne-glass and thereupon proceed to repair the damages made upon her beautiful complexion during the progress of the dinner.

What has become of that admirable beauty now, alas! No one can tell. For Madame Gauthrot—so wise in her generation—upon the appearance of her very first wrinkle, suddenly left society, and never since has she been persuaded to leave her voluntary retreat. She wished to be remembered, by all who ever knew and admired her, as 'La Belle Madame Gauthrot,' and none will ever be able to say that he has seen her age or wither. . . . She remains in the memory of all who knew her as a radiant vision of beauty.

The Parisienne of good society possesses a fine sense of the fitness and suitability of all that pertains to dress, and this makes of her pre-eminently the woman of taste. The best dressed and most *élégante* women of Paris will rarely be seen in the street on foot. The wealthier women drive and walk only in the Bois, where they go for real 'constitutionals.' There seems to be a belief in England—widely spread at least among a certain section of society—that the Frenchwoman in her own home lives almost constantly in a house-wrapper. This again is one of those general statements which only prove the entire ignorance of those who make them. It is quite true, however, that the Frenchwoman—of whatever class of society she

may be—always possesses two distinct sets of gowns: those which she wears in the house and those which she wears in the street. But far from having anything in common with the hideous house-wrapper that one sees in the London shops—whether English ladies really wear them or not, I have never been able to ascertain—the *robe d'intérieur* of a Parisienne is a garment of luxury and grace. It is neither shapeless nor waistless, but is cut of some light-coloured material of wool or silk, and is trimmed with silk or lace or embroidery, being fitted sufficiently close to the figure to be trim, and though flowing is yet not so loose as to appear slovenly. As its initial cost is considerably less than that of a street-gown, the Frenchwoman has adopted it for reasons of economy as well as for reasons of convenience. It is neither so richly trimmed nor so expensive as the sumptuous teagowns worn by women of the moneyed and more leisured classes in England, but it is built upon the same lines, and every *petite bourgeoise* wears one. French husbands prefer to see their wives in these simple and picturesque house-gowns in their own homes, rather than in the tight-fitting tailor-made skirts of walking-dresses designed for outdoor wear only. Moreover, they are most economical,

allowing the wearer to keep her street and visiting costumes fresh and spotless to the last. It is because it is customary for the Frenchwoman to adopt the *robe d'intérieur* that one never sees a French wife at home in the old soiled skirts and blouses which have done duty—almost beyond their limits—for months of outdoor wear, and which are nevertheless considered sufficiently fresh for the English husband to contemplate, on the principle that 'any old thing is good enough for him!'

If the Frenchwoman is attentive to her husband's tastes and tries to please him in every way by making herself charming to him, he himself is eminently the lover-husband, for it must always be remembered that his courting days begin only after marriage. Neither the Frenchwoman nor the Frenchman considers that as soon as they are legally bound they need no longer give themselves any trouble to please, which is unfortunately so often the case in those countries where young girls use all their charms to attract husbands, and after having attained marriage, consider that further effort is unnecessary.

I do not mean to imply that all French marriages are perfect, but I do say that as a rule they start out very happily, and that

even when love is spent—or if love has not blessed the union at all—most married couples remain companions, friends, and allies. This is observable even in their amusements. The Frenchwoman, ever anxious to keep her husband's attentions confined to herself, makes herself his companion in all his pursuits, assimilates his tastes, and even joins him in all his sports and games, as well as in his more serious undertakings. She is a most adaptable creature, and as dress is one of her special fads, as soon as she has learned a new sport, she sets her mind to the devising of a practical and becoming costume for the occasion. Thus we have seen Frenchwomen take to shooting, for which a particularly becoming costume has been adopted—to golf, to tennis, to motoring, and lastly to aviation. The Frenchwoman is determined to keep her husband if she can and at all costs, and in order to achieve this she adapts herself to every one of his new ideas in succession, insisting upon being considered his partner in his games as well as in his business. For, alas! at heart she is quite aware that the charm and the artistic methods of her lover-husband have been acquired by long and applied practice! She fears, too, that any day, at any hour, a rival in his affections may appear upon the scene.

She is always in constant fear of that possibly more attractive lady, so keeps ever on the *qui vive*, adapting herself with chameleon-like rapidity to his every changing mood and taste. Nine times out of ten, when you see a Frenchwoman make a fool of herself—dye her hair, paint her face, and dress far too youthfully for her years—you may be sure that all this is done to please and retain her husband!

I remember once a Frenchman asking me the rather naïve question: 'Do Englishmen love like Frenchmen?' 'Of course not,' I answered. 'Each loves with his own special temperament.' A Frenchman loves *La Femme*, that is to say Woman with a capital *W*. It sometimes happens that an Englishman loves, but he loves *a* particular woman. When that is the case, that particular woman may be sure that she holds his heart, if not for ever, at least for a very long time. With a Frenchman, no woman can ever be sure of holding him 'for ever, or even for any length of time.' And it is precisely this insecurity which lends him a certain charm. At least in the eyes of many Parisiennes.

The French *ménage* is therefore either a couple of lovers or a couple of business associates, but it would be difficult for an outsider

to discover to which of these two classes any particular French couple would belong. For the Frenchman, even when he has ceased to be the lover of his wife, has every outward attention and courtesy for her. A woman is to a Frenchman always a sacred thing, for even when she has ceased to interest him as an individual, he still considers that she has a right to claim his most attentive courtesy because she is of the feminine sex. In his opinion she is for that reason entitled to all the luxury, comfort and outward attention that he can possibly give her.

If anybody doubts this assertion, let him observe a Frenchman of the better classes accompanying his wife to a restaurant. The wife will be dressed with care and elegance, and will impress onlookers almost as an *objet d'art*, being indeed a magnificent elaboration of taste and fashion. It will be observed that her husband takes the greatest possible care of her as she is getting out of her carriage at the door of the restaurant. He will bow before her as he opens the door for her to enter, and will close the door carefully—almost reverently—after she has passed into the establishment. He will not allow the waiter to help her to take off her things—for no alien hand must

touch so precious a creature—but will perform these duties himself, seeking and finding the cosiest seat in the restaurant for her, where she will be carefully shielded from draughts, and where she can sit enthroned like a goddess to be admired and worshipped by all. He will then order the *menu* entirely to her liking, and when after dinner they leave the restaurant, if another man is going out and is near the exit as the lady passes, you will note that not only will he allow the lady to go first, but will stop and raise his hat deferentially to the husband, who will return his salute. Their courteous bows will be simultaneous. A swift, subtle smile will be exchanged between them—a smile of *camaraderie* and understanding, a smile of recognized fellowship—as the goddess gracefully sails out of the restaurant in all her pomp and splendour. This is the salute of one conscious and willing subservience to another; it is the sign of confraternity passing from one well-trained husband to a colleague in similar circumstances. . . .

Marriage as a contract is valid in France only as a purely civil one, although a Catholic priest may bless the union and the marriage ceremony be celebrated in a church. But the religious ceremony is in no way legal, and, alone, does not make

the marriage valid. The only ceremony which accomplishes this is the one which takes place at the *Mairie*, where the register is signed by the contracting parties, whose signatures must be duly witnessed by two witnesses for each party. The religious ceremony, which can only take place after the civil one, is merely a religious blessing or consecration which in no way affects the legality of the union. No priest would be entitled to perform the religious ceremony until the civil marriage had taken place. When occasionally a priest in revolt against the civil law has broken this particular law, he has been severely punished both by the legal and by the religious authorities.

In Republican society, however, which includes many avowed atheists and freethinkers, the religious ceremony at marriages—as at funerals also—is more often than not dispensed with altogether. Indeed, those political and professional men who are more or less connected with the Government or State Administrations, publicly affect to disregard the Church celebration, and if they marry, or if their children marry, they attend the *Mairie* only. This choice made between the religious ceremony and the purely civil marriage is a very important one, because it indicates the convictions and traditions—

or lack of traditions—in the families about to be united by the new marriage. It must be remembered, too, that in France the feelings and opinions of the entire families on both sides are taken into consideration quite as much as the feelings and opinions of the contracting parties themselves. When alluding to the marriage of any young acquaintance in France, one does not say, 'Miss So-and-so (or Mr. So-and-so) is getting married.' One says, 'Mr. So-and-so is marrying his daughter (or his son) to the daughter (or son) of Mr. So-and-so'—a very significant expression which defines the situation exactly.

Therefore it is only when the religious or republican convictions of both families have been consulted that it is decided whether there shall be a religious ceremony or not, and it has very often happened that a marriage which has been completely arranged in all its details has been broken off at the very last moment because a single important member of one of the two families has declared himself or herself opposed to the relinquishing of the priest's blessing.

Apart from all question of religious feeling, and consciously or unconsciously, what appeals more strongly to the imagination of the young

people in the ceremony of the Church is the pomp and magnificence of that ceremony. This is made evident by the fact that many families who dispense with the priest and blessing are not able to furnish the moral strength to relinquish the theatrical display attendant upon the celebration of marriage in a church. It therefore often happens that invitations are sent out to all the friends and acquaintances of a family to attend the marriage at the *Mairie*, whose *Salle des Mariages*, instead of presenting its ordinary appearance, with plain red velvet upholsteries, is so embellished and adorned with beautiful flowers and masses of palm-trees, so brilliantly lighted up with crystal chandeliers ablaze, fine orchestral music being performed during certain parts of the ceremony, that the guests are forcibly reminded of all the splendours of the religious ceremony. Yet another symbol of the religious ceremony that remains at the merely civil ceremony is the wedding-ring, which is sometimes given, or rather I might say exchanged, at the *Mairie*, for most wives of the *bourgeoisie* who wear this sign of their bondage themselves. insist that their husband should wear one likewise. The French wedding-ring is generally made so as to be able to open in two, each party being supposed to give half. Once the ring is put together the names of

husband and wife and the date of their marriage are inscribed inside. As it is customary for the wife to give her husband a wedding-ring when he gives her hers, the Catholic custom of exchanging rings at the altar after the priest has blessed both rings has become established. But at a civil ceremony this, of course, is an anomaly. In the Catholic Church the wedding-ring stands as a symbol not only of the bond between the two contracting parties, but also with the Church itself. It figures in the religious service only, and in no way is it even alluded to in the civil ceremony. At present many Frenchwomen who have been educated in the public laicized schools refuse to wear this symbol of their bond, so that there are many married women in France who wear no wedding-ring at all—a terrible heresy indeed, in the eyes of some Anglo-Saxons!

Yet the Frenchwomen who act thus are perfectly logical.

The separation of the civil and religious authorities which exists in France, explains the conflict between the two when the dissolution of a marriage is sought. The Catholic religion, which is the national religion of the country, regarding marriage as a sacrament, declares that it is indissoluble, and will not recognize divorce, even though it be the law of the land. French

Protestants, however, admit divorce, because they do not regard marriage itself in the light of a sacrament, though they allow it to be celebrated in their temples and with due religious rites.

Although Republican society discourages the religious ceremony, very firm Catholics, on the other hand, refuse to consider the merely civil and legal ceremony as truly binding. Thus, among many families of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, two people united only by the civil law are considered as not married, and are therefore not received as married olk. I remember once hearing a very strict Catholic lady say that though she *might* perhaps be persuaded to admit to her house two people who lived together without any legal tie at all, she would *not* countenance any marriage that had merely been celebrated at the *Mairie* and had not received the blessing of the Church!

When two people are married at the *Mairie* and afterwards at the church, which is the general form of most marriages—for many of those whose religious convictions are not very strong conform largely to this rule—the two ceremonies may be performed immediately after one another in the same morning. The contracting parties drive to the *Mairie* with their parents and four witnesses, and as soon as the legal ceremony is over there,

they drive to the church, where all their friends and acquaintances are awaiting them, and the religious ceremony then takes place with music, pomp, incense, and beautiful toilettes, for smarter gowns are worn at a wedding in France than at any other day ceremony.

In the provinces, the two ceremonies often take place on different days, the legal one being performed in great simplicity a day or two before the other, almost as if it were a mere formality of no consequence. The young people walk into the *Mairie* in simple afternoon dress, attended by their witnesses. But as the custom among religious people is to regard the civil ceremony as quite negligible, during the time intervening between the two ceremonies, the young people are not allowed to be together a single instant. Nevertheless, during this period the bride is addressed as *madame*. It is only after the second ceremony has taken place that the young people are considered to be properly married, and are left together alone for the first time.

Concerning the property of married people, there are various forms of contract recognized by French law. But when no marriage contract is made at all, the husband and wife are considered to be *en communauté*. There is also the *régime dotal*, by means of which the woman is in pos-

session o. ..' own dowry, although the husband has the right of administering the revenues of that dowry. The wife is unable to dispose of any part of her capital without her husband's written consent.

In case of a divorce, a woman's dowry must be entirely reconstituted by the husband—even if the capital has been broken into, or even entirely dispersed, by mutual consent of the parties during the duration of the marriage.

Before a marriage can be celebrated either civilly or religiously the banns must be published at the *Mairie;* that is to say, a notice must be fixed upon the notice-board outside the *Mairie* describing the contracting parties and announcing their intention to m..y. The publication must declare the full names, professions, domiciles of the intending contracting parties, as well as those of their parents. Within quite a recent date (24th of June, 1907) some important modifications have been made in the French Code concerning the celebration of marriages, and one of the new articles announces that the publication at the *Mairie* need now be made but *once*, instead of *twice at eight days' interval*, as before. Ten days after this sole publication, the marriage may be duly celebrated.

Young people of both sexes must be fully

thirty years of age before they can marry without their parents' consent. Nevertheless, after the age of twenty-one, if their parents refuse this consent, they may force them to give it by means of an *acte respectueux*, through the offices of a *notaire* legally certified. Thirty days after the notification of the *acte respectueux* the marriage may be celebrated.

It must be remembered that French law does not allow parents to disinherit their children entirely. They may not leave their inheritance to strangers. This in a measure explains why parents have so much power over their grown-up children's choice.

It is impossible in France, at any age, to get married secretly without the parents being informed, and therefore the well-known situation in England of a son or daughter announcing his or her marriage after the ceremony has taken place is quite impossible.

When the contracting parties have lost their parents their grandparents stand in lieu of these, and the same laws apply to them as to the parents.

When giving consent to the marriage of their children, should both parents not agree upon the subject, it is the father's consent alone which counts legally. This often is the case between

divorced parents, who, when asked to consent to the marriage of their children, often disagree on principle.

During recent years there have been many discussions in England concerning the vexed question of divorce, and in France we are astonished to learn from these discussions how very inadequately the present English law is able to cope with the great problems which more modern consciences have evolved.

The divorce laws of France are of a far more recent date than those of England, divorce itself only having become legal in 1883. One of the advantages at least of the Republic is that, being a comparatively new institution, the laws that it promulgates are up to date and more or less well adapted to the spirit of the age. The English laws, being old and out of date, seem compared to the French laws, practically effete, for they no longer respond to the requirements of modern demands. To fit in with the English constitution the older law can be only partially touched up, unless it be entirely rehandled to meet newer requirements.

With us, we have almost the contrary difficulties to deal with, for divorce was granted in France almost before the people of the country were prepared to understand its use (which, by

the way, is the case with so many of our liberties!). The result is that since 1883 the number of divorces we have had has been somewhat appalling.

Divorce in France is granted officially for three reasons, though it is a well-known fact, throughout the country, that the law may be interpreted in a most elastic manner.

The three *official* reasons for which the Code admits divorce are the following:—

1. Unfaithfulness of either husband or wife, and under the same conditions for both, or desertion of either party.

2. Acts of violence, ill-usage, blows, or cruelty. There is also another reason which comes under the head of *injures graves*. This last term can be translated by: 'injury or offence, harm, hurt, damage, insult, contempt, affront, outrage, or abuse.' It will be seen that under this heading various explanations may be brought forth for the obtaining of a divorce. I have known of one divorce being granted on the basis of 'grave faults on both sides that nevertheless do not affect conjugal honour.' It is easy to see how the various terms of this clause may be interpreted, for *injures graves* may mean a physical, a material, or a moral offence, and very often a divorce is granted when *injures graves* is in-

tended to represent merely a difference of opinion. Thus it is that incompatibility of humour, which is not a legal cause for divorce, can become one.

3. The sentencing of one of the two married persons to a penal sentence—*peines afflictives et infamantes*, which means those penalties which do not merely consist in fines, &c., and which bring dishonour and contumely upon the name of the offender.

Concerning the social position of divorced people in France, although year by year there is less stigma attached to the position of a divorced man, the woman who has been divorced is regarded with less favour. And for this reason : a French husband always makes it a point of honour not to allow the blame to rest upon his wife, even when she is the really guilty party. He therefore allows the divorce to go against himself. The divorce proceedings are arranged by the disuniting parties by mutual consent, so that this end may be attained.

In very old-fashioned, conventional society and among the Catholics of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, there is still a great feeling against divorce. That this feeling is still extremely strong in France was evidenced by the heated discussion which arose two winters ago in Paris con-

cerning Paul Bourget's play, *Un Divorce.* All thoughtful Paris was divided into two distinct groups on the question which the play offered for debate, and there were heated arguments to be heard upon the subject at most of the smart dinner-parties of the season.

Here is the story:

Gabrielle de Chambault has divorced her husband because he is a *débauché* and a drunkard. She has married again a very good, kind man—Albert Darras—who has brought up the son of her first husband as his own. Though Monsieur Darras is himself a freethinker, he allows his wife to give their daughter—Jeanne—a religious training. But Madame Darras feels that once more her religious convictions are overpowering her. She begs her confessor to allow her to take Communion with her daughter, but the confessor—Père Evrard—explains that the Church, not recognizing the validity of her second marriage, considers her to be living in a state of sin, and refuses her request. This refusal makes her very miserable, and she considers almost in the light of a divine judgment upon her second marriage those misunderstandings which have arisen lately between herself and her husband concerning the child of her first marriage—young Lucien de Chambault. The young man has

himself fallen in love with a lady-nurse—Berthe Planat—who was formerly seduced by a worthless individual, and deserted with her child. Nevertheless she is represented to be a noble-minded and proud young woman, and in face of the refusal of his mother, influenced by her second husband, to countenance his marriage with Berthe, Lucien leaves his stepfather's house. He returns to the abode of his own father to obtain his consent—the sole necessary consent recognized by French law in those cases where there is dissension between two parents. Lucien is therefore free to marry Berthe. Monsieur de Chambault, who has been very ill, now dies, and Madame Darras, his former wife, more and more under the influence of her renewed religious fervour, implores her second husband to regularize her position with regard to the Church and obtain the consecration of a priest's blessing. But Darras, hostile to all religious convictions, refuses to consider his legal union celebrated at the *Mairie* twelve years before, as irregular. Finally, Madame Darras threatens to leave her husband with her daughter, but abandons the idea at the instigation of Père Evrard, who tells her it is her duty to remain with her husband, because ultimately she may bring him to share her religious convictions.

The play offers no real conclusion to the question, which still remains open, the conflict being between Madame Darras's religious opinions and her husband's equally strong anticlerical convictions.

According to Paul Bourget, divorce is one of the dangers of our modern society. Without taking part for either opinion, this piece of fiction was an excellent presentation of the question as it now stands in France.

The Church still holds out firmly against divorce, that is to say, *in principle*, for with the Catholic Church there are often arrangements to be made on a monetary basis. It is therefore only a case of sufficiently large sums to be paid in Rome and the marriage can be annulled, even when there are children of the marriage. In the 'Noble Faubourg' the religious annulment of a marriage is not regarded with such contumely as a divorce, so that when young women whose marriages have been annulled in Rome, reappear in society after a second marriage, even though they may be received at first somewhat coldly by the more conventional dowagers, they are soon welcomed once more and regarded with sympathy.

In up-to-date Republican society there is no stigma attached to divorce, and both divorce and a subsequent marriage now appear so simple a

process that one may often hear a young French girl declare a few days before her nuptials: 'Oh! if I don't get on with my husband I shall divorce next year!' I once heard a very worldly aunt say to her niece, whom she was imploring to marry a certain man the niece did not like: 'Marry him, my dear. You can divorce next year, and then you will be called "madame" and be able to live alone and do as you like!'

Although divorce in France is granted officially only for the three reasons explained above, it is well known that with the aid of a clever solicitor and one or two confederates, it can be procured merely for incompatibility of humour. But of course the two parties must agree to disagree. I know of two such cases.

In one case a man and his wife had drifted apart for many years. They had one child, who was seven years of age, and the husband had been convinced for some time past of his wife's interest in another man. Yet they lived on comparatively friendly terms because they had agreed that each should live his or her own life. Some years later the husband met a young girl, with whom he fell in love. He then told his wife that he wished to separate from her and marry this young lady.

'But you can't divorce me!' cried the wife.

'Oh yes, I can,' said the husband. 'For many years past, I have had the proofs of your unfaithfulness.'

The wife was astonished at the retort, but the husband proceeded to explain that if she would agree to divorce he would take the blame upon himself, allowing the case to go against him, and thus save her from social condemnation. Finally, they decided that the husband should produce a series of incriminating letters addressed to him by a complacent mutual friend, which, proving his worthlessness, would thus enable the wife to sue against him. When the necessary letters arrived from the pen of the accommodating female friend, both husband and wife were charmed with them, and were greatly amused by their cleverness. With these proofs in hand the wife applied for a divorce, which was easily obtained.

All comment concerning the immorality of such a proceeding is unnecessary, and certainly I do not quote the example as an instance of the manners of the best people.

When all parties are thus in agreement and there are no legal obstacles of any kind, divorce proceedings are astonishingly rapid. I remember one year meeting at one of the larger Parisian jewellers' shops, just before New Year's Day,

some acquaintances of mine—a young barrister and his pretty wife who were shopping together, buying New Year's gifts. The husband was choosing a long diamond-studded chain for his spouse, concerning the choice of which they asked my opinion and advice. When the gift had been selected the husband went over to another counter to pay the bill, and I remarked, laughingly, to the young woman: 'How delightful it must be to have a charming husband like yours, who takes such a pleasure in choosing your presents.' She looked at me in a strange, hesitating fashion, half questioningly, and then merely remarked, '*Vous trouvez?*'

I was about to answer when the husband came back to us, and a few moments later they left the shop together, apparently on the best of terms.

This meeting took place on the 28th of December. On the following 21st of January—that is to say, exactly three weeks and two days later—these two young people were legally and finally divorced. Could one indeed hope for a rapider solution of one's conjugal difficulties?

A point in French divorce cases, however, concerning which Frenchmen are most punctilious, is the question of damages. It would not be possible in France for a man to claim money damages, whatever his wife's conduct might

have been. Indeed, there would not be a single man in French society to offer his hand to a husband who would claim or accept such compensation. The attitude of French society upon this particular point was well shown in a recent divorce case between two English people who resided in a French colony. I remember reading the case in the English papers. When the judge asked the offended husband what sum he claimed for damages, he quoted the nominal price of one franc, alleging that if he claimed a higher sum no decent man in the neighbourhood would speak to him again.

What makes divorce in France comparatively easy of solution is the system of the wife's dowry. This keeps the woman economically independent, not only during the years of marriage, but also after a divorce has been granted, for her dowry is always returned to her in totality by the husband, even when, during the years of their union, the capital of that dowry has been spent by consent of *both* parties. In some cases, this comes hard upon the man, for often, by having to refund the entire capital, he may be financially ruined. For many Frenchmen who marry have no personal fortune, and therefore possess no capital, though they occupy some high function in a State Administration which brings them in a good income,

while their wife's dowry represents an annual income equal to their own salary. But if a wife has no dowry of her own, when a divorce has been granted, the judge—unless the wife has greatly offended and lapsed—will condemn the husband to pay alimony, the amount of which sum is determined by the court.

The guardianship of the children of a broken marriage is generally given by the French judges to the more blameless parent, but in no case is a parent *entirely* debarred either from a certain authority over his or her children, or at least from accession to the children at stated intervals.

Besides divorce, there still exists in French law a partial separation between those husbands and wives who do not agree, which is the judicial separation *de corps et de biens*. But this does not admit the remarriage of either party. It is, however, a favourite method adopted by those whose religious principles forbid them from applying for a divorce. Nevertheless, a *séparation de corps et de biens* can be transformed into a real divorce at the request of either party, when the actual separation has existed for more than three years. Thus a wife consenting to a judicial separation, though not wishing for divorce, could be divorced at the end of three years with or without her consent.

IV

EDUCATION

THE French are a highly educated race, and from the top to the bottom of the social ladder possess a subtle and nimble understanding, being practically as well as intellectually assimilative. In modern France every citizen is educated, that is to say, everybody possesses some sort of instruction, and everybody is eruditely inclined, of whatever class he or she may be. Throughout the whole nation there is a great respect for mental acquirements, and indeed—be it said to the honour of the French—the cult of brains is far deeper and stronger in France than the cult of riches. The humblest working man or woman honours intellectual achievement more than any other kind, and is proud of the eminence acquired in French art, literature, and science, which still helps to make France the foremost intellectual country of the world. Indeed, the French would rather be inclined to err upon the side of exces-

sive intellectuality, prizing it often even above character.

Were I to give my candid opinion, I should say that the France of to-day—far from being degenerate, as some of her more envious rivals would have it—is suffering from an over-cultivation of the mind. And if scoffers declare her 'degenerate' because of her political ventures—which they cannot understand, and are therefore not competent to judge—it would be at least well for them to consider the intellectual quality of those political men who have governed France during the last forty years—who, springing from nothing, have been self-made; who, having had neither tradition nor training to guide them, and who, precisely because of this lack, possess less mainstay of character to steady them, have at least not been lacking in brains. Such men, for instance, as Gambetta, the fiery orator; Jules Ferry, the great educationist; Waldeck-Rousseau, the great statesman; and even [illegible]nd, that much-discussed reformer of later days, surely are there to prove the healthy energy of their own country, even though there be so many noisy seceders who, because they cry out the loudest, are best heard by the indiscriminating outsider.

When treating the question of education in France, it is well to distinguish between what is

meant in French by the word 'education' and what is understood by the same term in English. If the real signification of the word means 'upbringing,' then the English have somewhat perverted its original meaning, for in modern English by the word 'education' is understood and meant 'instruction.' In French, 'education' signifies a cultivation of manners, but not necessarily of brains. A man may possess 'a good education'—*avoir une bonne éducation*—while possessing very little instruction. But in English to be 'well educated' signifies to be well trained mentally, or, as the French would express it, *avoir une bonne instruction.* The phrase that one is continually hearing in France, '*Il a reçu une bonne education et une solide instruction*,' is equivalent to saying in English, 'He has good manners and has been well-educated.'

This differentiation between the terms 'education' and 'instruction' is exemplified most accurately in the upbringing of the children of both nations. English schools for both sexes fashion the characters of the pupils; French schools fashion the brains. In educational matters—more than in any other way—those two distinct characteristics of the two nations are clearly defined: the English or Anglo-Saxon

spirit sacrificing all to an ethical ideal; the French sacrificing to an intellectual ideal. It is apparent in all phases of English life—political and otherwise—and is evinced each day by the choice the English people themselves make of their own leaders: that the English appreciate moral character primordially and above all other qualities. It is as evident, too, in all phases of French life, and by the choice the French make of their own great men, that intellectual attainment is supremely prized among the French. Manifestly the English nation consider brains as quite secondary to character, for they never hesitate to sacrifice them—even when of the most brilliant order and of the greatest credit to their own country—to moral considerations. This has been proved over and over again by the immolation made by the British public of their own great men upon the altar of morality. Now, the French err upon the other side: and perhaps the explanation of the everlasting jeer at France's so-called 'degeneracy' lies largely in the fact of that difference of appreciation. France cannot always adequately judge England, because she cannot adequately realize England's indifference to intellectuality. On the other hand, England cannot fully discriminate as to the methods of

judgment of the French, because these methods proceed from an intellectual conception that has a total disregard for pure ethics. The continual striving after a moral ideal, rather than after an intellectual or artistic one, often blunts the critical faculties of the Anglo-Saxons, who can rarely judge even a work of art, without taking into consideration its moral teaching. The French differ entirely from the Anglo-Saxons in this attitude of mind. Their exterior outlook is purely intellectual or artistic, and they cannot conceive the value of an appreciative criticism that is set upon a moral basis.

That education in France is a training of taste and emotion, and that in Anglo-Saxon countries education is a process of development of moral character, is observable even in the earliest stages of the two systems. When a young English mother chides her naughty little boy for bad behaviour, she will say: 'You must not do that, Johnnie dear; it is wrong.' Thus from the very beginning the young Anglo-Saxon is taught to judge life by standards of moral good and evil. This conviction is so strong in the mind of the English mother that, should her child persist in his evil-doing, she will add: 'If you do that again, Johnnie, I shall have to punish you,' thus implying a moral obligation for herself. It is evident

that she considers it her *duty* to chastise her recreant son.

But when the French *maman* reproves her naughty boy, she says: '*Ne fais pas cela, mon chéri, ce n'est pas joli,*' and creates in the child's young and unformed mind a conception of what is beautiful and what is ugly, and by this means forms his taste, pointing out to him what to admire or what not to admire. Ultimately the criterion of a most fastidious selection is formed, which serves for his moral guidance. He avoids evil not because it is *wrong*, but because it is *ugly*, therefore repulsive.

If the French child, notwithstanding his mother's warning, still persists in his bad behaviour, she will then expostulate, and finally, realizing that his youthful taste is not yet sufficiently critical, will make an appeal, not to his sense of right and wrong, nor to his young and therefore undeveloped reason, but to his feelings: '*Si tu fais cela, mon chéri, tu feras de la peine à ta mère.*'

Many French children have, indeed, been entirely educated upon this purely sentimental principle—and a complete process of education has been achieved thus by means of appeals to the taste or feelings. It is only later, that ideas of absolute right and wrong are evolved in the

mind of the French child, when they are revealed to him as purely mental and speculative conceptions.

The relative methods of appreciation of the two races is further exemplified in their choice of religious conviction. The Anglo-Saxon races are of the Protestant religion, which is a moral and ethical teaching rather than a pure dogma, while the French have never ceased to embrace the Roman Catholic religion, which is so purely a *faith* that it places its tenets even above reason itself.

I do not attempt to discuss as to which is the better process of education—the cultivation of intellectual and fastidious taste or the cultivation of character: the one is the method of a highly civilized speculative race, while the other is the method of a strongly active race. It would be impossible here to compare the relative excellence of the two systems, and I have merely taken these examples to illustrate the two widely divergent mentalities of the two races—the Anglo-Saxon and the Latin. For it is difficult to define an object satisfactorily without comparing it with another object of like nature, and it would be almost impossible to explain here the French point of view, without comparing it with that of the English.

Education

Since the advent of the Republic a good general education—and even culture too, if desired—is virtually free to all French subjects. Rich and poor are therefore educated alike. This, it has already been explained, greatly aids in doing away with class distinctions. Thus on the benches of the Lycées, where all classes mix together, French pupils make a continual and most exhaustive study of their own language, learning to speak and write it with the greatest purity till they are well advanced into the twenties. All educated French people speak their own tongue with grammatical purity and an undefiled pronunciation, and none would attempt to popularize the ungrammatical 'catch phrases' which even distinguished people amuse themselves by repeating in England. Ungrammatical speech in French is always a proof of defective education. There is no possible means of establishing class distinctions in France according to the various degrees of purity in the speaking of the mother-tongue, as, for instance, in England, where the quality of accent creates a complete barrier between the various divisions of English society. The English of a 'belted earl' is so distinctive from that of a coster, that it differentiates him more widely from the coster class of his own land than a Frenchman is differentiated from a

Russian or Greek. But, in France, the speech, both as regards accent and pronunciation, of a peer's son and of a grocer's son, educated at the same establishment, would not differentiate them in the least. In fact, the chances would be that the grocer's son would speak a still purer and more perfect language than the peer's son, because he would have given himself far more trouble to acquire the language perfectly.

The systems of instruction in France are most clearly defined. They may be separated into three distinct classes, each under a distinctly separate control. The Universities—controlled by the Government—deal with all establishments for Higher and Secondary Education, such as the Faculties, Training Colleges, Lycées, and Colleges. The municipalities control the Municipal or Primary Schools, which offer but a primary course of instruction, excluding Latin and Greek and all classical teaching, but making a great stand for modern languages, taught practically and without scholarly aim. In Paris there are also a few Ecoles Primaires Supérieures, wherein the primary programmes, though on a higher plane, are adhered to. All Primary Schools, except the Ecoles Primaires Supérieures, are quite free of charge, and even in these latter only a small fee is demanded. Lastly, come the Ecoles

Libres and Ecclesiastical Colleges and Convents — s. ne of which, notwithstanding the stringent laws of recent years, still exist. These religious institutions boast a Catholic University at their head and still purport to give as solid an instruction as the State-governed schools, plus a firm basis of moral and religious training, which the State neglects. But, as a matter of fact, one would be inclined to aver that the ecclesiastical teaching is rather an education than an instruction, in the French acceptance of the two terms. It teaches boys and girls all the social arts, and inculcates good manners primordially. It also inspires them with a holy horror of the Republic and all things pertaining thereto. It was because of the spirit of this propagandism that the State authorities began to be alarmed and hurried forward the Separation Laws some years ago, as the doctrines of these establishments controlled by the clergy promised too many rebellious citizens for the Republic in coming years. As the directors and teachers of these schools were in the stipend of the State, the Government averred—perhaps rightly—that it was fool's work paying people to overthrow one's self, and who sought to undermine—and in the most practical manner possible by the teaching of the youth of the nation—the very principles by means of

which a Republican Government could exist at all. Reproaches of this nature formed the basis of the excuse of the Government in the rather merciless war waged against ecclesiastical teaching. Nevertheless, in spite of the disadvantages which ecclesiastical education presented in the appreciation of a Republican Government, one is bound to admit that the clerical educators had indeed achieved the art of combining education with instruction and manners with culture. For in French society to-day it is still easy to discern whether a man or woman has been educated by a religious institution or by a State one; and it is always evident that the State-educated person, if he has not been inculcated with good home traditions, lacks the polished refinement of manner which characterizes the pupil of clerical instructors.

The other Ecoles Libres, of which there are very few in France, are controlled by special committees acting for private companies. To this class belong the Ecole Alsacienne, as well as the Ecole de Normandie, and Les Roches, which are organized more or less upon an English plan, and which are the result of the recent craze in France for all things Anglo-Saxon.

But all schools in France, whether under

State, clerical, or private control, are subjected to State inspection. This keeps the programmes of instruction up to the level of the highest standard, and forces directors of private establishments, as well as of State institutions, to conform to certain hygienic principles. For there are Inspectors of Hygiene as well as of educational programmes. There still exist in France, within easy reach of Paris, several colleges for the daughters of military officers, under the control of the Legion of Honour. These colleges, directed by *professeurs libres*—that is to say, professors provided with their University degrees but holding no appointment under Government—impart a teaching that is much the same as that given in convent schools. The tone of these establishments is very high and their social position equally so. I remember once talking to a friend of mine, herself the daughter of an officer, who had been entirely educated at St. Denis, where one of these schools is situated. My friend, who had not married a military man herself—she was the wife of an Inland Revenue official—was bewailing the fact that she could not send her own little girl to be educated at one of these schools, for the stringent rules of the establishments exclude all but the daughters of army officers. 'I am so sorry,' she said, 'that

my little Jeanne cannot be admitted to St. Denis. For the Legion of Honour schools are the only educational establishments now in France which can undertake to train a *femme du monde!*'

Roughly speaking, it may be said that there are three classes of State-governed schools which admit pupils of all classes of society. These are the Higher, the Secondary, and the Primary establishments. First come the Universities or Facultés, in some dozen or fifteen of the larger towns, which deliver degrees and organize lectures that come under the heading of the Higher Educational course. The Facultés provide special technical schools for the study of law, medicine, engineering, mining, &c., as well as Normal Colleges for the training of professors. After these come Lycées and Colleges, which belong to Secondary Education, and of which there is at least one in every large town of France and several in the larger towns. The distinction between a Lycée and a College exists in the fact that the College is controlled not only by the State, but in a certain degree by the local municipal authorities also. The titles and degrees of the teaching staff of a College are not necessarily so high as those required for professorship in a Lycée. A Lycée therefore

ranks higher than a College. Nevertheless all the professors of Lycées and Colleges must hold one of the higher University degrees—the *agrégation* or the *licence*. Professors are appointed by the Minister of Public Instruction. Their appointments are for life, and they cannot be dismissed from the University once they have entered it, though a professor may be punished for bad behaviour by his direct chief—the Minister of Public Instruction—by being put *en congé* for a more or less definite period. Their salaries are paid by the State, a percentage being retained each month in view of the *pension*, to which each will be entitled at the age of sixty years, after thirty years of active service. Each Lycée has at its head a *Directeur*, who is aided by two other officials—the *Censeur* (in the Girls' Lycées these officials are called *Surveillantes Générales*) and the *Econome*, or Bursar. The Directeur or Directrice controls the establishment, though he has but little control over the professors, whom he can neither appoint nor dismiss. Nevertheless not only has he the right of assisting at any lecture in the establishment which he may choose to honour with his presence, but he must report regularly to the authorities at the Ministry his appreciation concerning the educational methods and efficiency of each pro-

fessor on the staff. His other duties are limited to the arranging of the time-tables, to the receiving of the parents of the pupils, and to the management of the interior economy of the establishment. For the French Directeur has neither the rights nor the personal influence of an English headmaster, and as the Censeur attends to the discipline of the institution, and the Econome deals with its economics, the *rôle* of the Directeur is greatly restrained. The Econome, also appointed by the Minister, receives the fees from the parents of pupils, and pays not only the salaries of the teaching staff but also of the entire *personnel* of the Lycée, even including the wages of the *concierges* and servants attached to the establishment. Each Lycée is partly self-supporting and partly State-supported. The fees paid by the pupils are low, so that the Lycée may be within reach of more modest ratepayers, yet are not so low as to put them within reach of the working-classes. Nevertheless the fees do not cover a large part of the expenses.

The programmes of study of the Lycées and Colleges include a classical teaching, with Latin and Greek, science, rhetoric, and philosophy for boys, and a similar though not identical programme of studies for girls. Thus, French

education covers the whole range of the mental faculties, the study of rhetoric and philosophy proving the hyper-culture demanded of all students who have passed through a Lycée. For rhetoric trains the literary and æsthetic taste, while philosophy fixes the ideals of *le beau*, *le vrai*, and *le bien*. Happily the study of rhetoric is limited to a single year, for the French have a taste for oratorical discourse which might almost be termed excessive. Their passion for words—'idle words'—put into beautiful form is cultivated to an extreme and amounts almost to a disease. No nation is more keenly sensitive to powerful eloquence, as is always evinced in the case of any oratorical genius in the Chamber of Deputies, whose brilliant discourses may often carry away his colleagues' feelings, to the extent of affecting their reason and often, too, their votes. The study of philosophy, happily also confined to one year, increases and influences the natural love of the French for philosophical discussion. Yet it is an excellent training, which enables the pupil to co-ordinate the whole of his previous learning and to map out a programme for future self culture—if he so wishes—when his Lycée days are over. Concerning this question it may be interesting to quote here a small passage from the admirable work of Mr.

France from Within

Cloudesley Brereton—the greatest recognized English authority on questions of Secondary Education—in his *Comparison between French and English Secondary Schools.* Mr. Brereton understands the system of French Lycée education thoroughly, having passed several years in France in order to make a profound study of the question. He says:

"Certainly one can speak with experience of the extreme value of this philosophical education. It is not only for the pupil a *résumé* an *Erklärung*, of the past, it is also a base and a groundwork for his future education, providing him as it were with mental pigeon-holes, wherein he may arrange his subsequent experience. The mere fact of teaching the pupil to examine, analyse, and classify his ideas, and arrange them into a coherent whole, seems to me of the highest value. The most effective personalities, apart from fanatics, are those in whom this classification has obtained the greatest extension, more especially when they possess in addition a strong will as a driving power. It would be well if we, in England, had a little more respect for and appreciation of general ideas, which after all are but the intellectual names of great moral principles. We should certainly be able to reason out many of our social and political questions more readily, and be less slaves to the gross sophisms which obtain currency from the neglect of the ordinary cultivated man to examine the exact meaning of the terms with which he reasons. It is true that philosophy, in France, wears of all philosophies the least forbidding look. It may not attain the profundity of German philosophy; in some cases it may only be a sort of glorified common sense; but in its lucidity, in its close attachment to the problems of daily life, it finds at once its strength and its weakness. Nor is it by any means so shallow as foreigners

inclined to think. The depth is there, but the bottom is seen so easily because the *milieu* is so transparent. In France the philosophers do not forget that their subject is a branch of literature, and the whole attitude of the best writers is not to pose as high-priests of mystery, explaining the *obscurum per obscurius*, but rather to show, with the greatest suppression of self, how after all the thing is not so difficult to produce. Culture fortified by clear thinking would appear to be the aim of the two parts of the *Bacca[illegible]reat*.''

The critical faculty of the French is extremely developed, almost over-developed, for it amounts almost to a fault. [illegible] where the Anglo-Saxon seeks to discover the beauty of a [illegible] idea, the Frenchman is often embarrassed by his own ruthless seeking for faults of versification, rules of prosody, &c. A *faute de français* is in his eyes so heinous a crime that it spoils all his pleasure in the spirit of the production. Indeed, so critical of form are some French writers, that I have myself heard some say that they could not read Balzac because his style was so commonplace; while I have often heard others declare that the idea in prose is nothing—form alone is everything, and there can be no real idea of any value without perfect form of expression. Some go so far as to declare that they prefer a commonplace idea well expressed to a great and rare idea badly expressed. The French have indeed

an almost exaggerated love of pure literary form, and French writers give themselves endless pains to attain to this perfection. I remember once asking a French *prosateur* if he found his own language a difficult one to write. 'It is so difficult,' he replied, 'that it is only when an author has been publishing books for upwards of ten years, or so, that he can assert himself capable of writing a single French sentence correctly.' This is, perhaps, an extreme hypercritical point of view, but there are many in France who would share it.

But I am quite willing to admit that there may exist a *juste milieu* between the hyper-artistic perfection of the French phrase and the slipshod method of the English one. There is, of course, but one true way of expressing an idea, and that is the *right* way.

As an example of the French love of ratiocination in search of exact terms, I remember once, at the *Cours d'Agrégation* at the Sorbonne, that an entire afternoon was devoted to the discussion of a point concerning the translation of a passage in Shakespeare. The work under study was *King Henry the Fifth*. When the poet describes the English King,

posted on a hill opposite the battlefield, watching his son, the Black Prince, win the battle, he says:—

> 'Whiles his most mighty father on a hill
> Stood smiling to behold his lion's whelp
> Forage in blood. . . .'

Now, the whole point of the controversy was to decide as to whether Shakespeare meant 'he smiled as he was in the act of beholding,' or 'he smiled *because* he beheld.' The original English sentence could be rendered into French by *Il souriait* à *voir* or by *Il souriait* de *voir*. Hence an ambiguity of signification which the French literary mind could not tolerate. Each student was questioned as to his opinion of the poet's meaning, and each having something to say upon the subject, three valuable hours of the lecture were thus lost. I forget now how the point was ultimately settled, or indeed whether it was settled at all, but it was a fair example of the peculiar insistence of the French mind for exactness and precision of expression.

It is interesting to note how many men—often the sons of the richer peasants—have risen to eminence in politics, art, literature, science, &c., by means of the secondary education afforded

to them so cheaply by the State. It is a trite saying in France that *L'Université mène a tout—à condition d'en sortir*— which means to say that, having obtained possession of all diplomas and degrees delivered by the University, a young Frenchman may pretend to the most ambitious careers, for all are open to him. Many of those who rise in the social scale by the means afforded by the University remain within its precincts as professors themselves. But this does not change the fact that they *have* risen in the social scale, because they take the rank of the degree which they have acquired, and not the rank of the class from which they originally sprang.

The social position of University professors —both men and women—is very different in France from what it is in England. All intellectual attainment being greatly revered in France, a professor is always honoured in society and elsewhere—and by 'professor' I mean those teachers who, holding an *agrégation* or a *licence*, are on the staff of an ordinary Lycée. It must be remembered that in a highly intellectualized country like France, much more is demanded of a professor than mere educational technique. The degrees required for a professorship of modern languages, for instance,

are acquired only after an extremely difficult competitive examination at the Sorbonne, not only in the language for which the candidate is qualifying, but also in other languages with which that language must be compared, and in those from which it is derived. Thus to obtain the degree necessary for the professorship of English, an extensive knowledge not only of French and English is required, but also of German and Old English, as well as a comprehensive study of the ancient dialects which form the basis of modern English. The students who qualify for these examinations make a far more profound study of the English language than can be made at any English school or even University. Once having gone through this course, they know the grammar and syntax of the language as few English people do, and are enabled thus to be most critical of English prose. An ordinarily educated Englishman would be greatly astonished at the critical knowledge of his own tongue possessed by certain Sorbonne students. He would find that some Frenchmen might possibly not be *au courant* of modern English slang, or of the slipshod tongue spoken to-day in modern English society, but that they could tell him a great deal about his own language and

the writing thereof, of which he himself is profoundly ignorant.

The critical faculty of the Frenchman is essentially acute; he is a stylist or nothing, and as he makes an exhaustive study of his own tongue and writes it purely, he is keenly sensitive to the style of the foreign languages he studies. It is an interesting fact to note, that if one has learned to write correctly in one's own language, forcibly, one will preserve the same style in an acquired tongue.

'How can I learn to write pure and good English?' asked young Oscar Wilde of Ruskin, when a student at Oxford.

'Read and study the great French prose writers,' was the reply.

And Wilde was wont to declare that at the time he received it, he did not understand the Master's advice. But it was clearly apparent to him later.

Compare the methods of the conscientious French student who prepares himself for an English professorship in a French college with those of the young English man or woman who, coming over to France to 'pick up' French, and who, wanting to make a little pocket-money meanwhile, has the impudence to propose himself or herself as a teacher of

English merely because he or she can converse in the ungrammatical language of the modern middle-classes of England! The critical French employer will have none of them! Is it to be wondered at?

The authorities at the Ministry of Public Instruction are most eager to obtain the best kind of teaching for modern languages, and have gone to work in the most efficient manner possible to obtain it. The principle which they advocate is that practice should precede theory —which is indeed the only rational method of acquiring any modern language. The professors therefore begin by teaching the younger pupils to *speak* English, by means of nursery rhymes learned by rote, and sung and recited in class. Pieces of prose carefully read out aloud by the professor many times are committed to memory by the pupils, and games are played in the schoolroom; picture and object lessons are brought to bear upon the teaching also. No attempt is made to start on grammar or syntax until the pupil has acquired a certain vocabulary upon which to base theories. Principles and laws are finally deduced from a great number of agglomerated facts and from a great number of sentences learned by heart, and by the help of a wide

vocabulary theories can be evolved and explained.

La Question du Latin is a subject that is being actually discussed with fervour in French educational circles and has even gained the medium of the Press. The point in conflict is to decide as to whether it is worth while or not to devote so large a portion of the school curriculum to Greek and Latin subjects as is now done.

The dead languages, which have always held a prominent position in the programmes of all the Lycées, are intended to give each boy a chance of acquiring culture later if he so wishes, though the actual studies at the Lycée itself do not go very far afield. Now the partisans of the 'No Latin' theory aver that all that the Lycée programmes can possibly accomplish is to give an imperfect *aperçu*, and no real knowledge or further desire for it; and students—unless they are themselves preparing for professorship, never learn sufficient Latin and Greek to read them in the original text, and probably never even look at a Latin book during the rest of their lives after they have left the Lycée. The time devoted to these studies has therefore been practically wasted; whereas the same time devoted to the study

of more modern languages might be more fruitfully employed. These newer educationists go even further, and assert that modern culture is no longer necessarily based upon a knowledge of the Humanities. A student who makes a profound study of the literature and language of Shakespeare, Shelley, Goethe and Schiller—not to mention Dante—in the original texts, would not only have acquired modern languages—more practically useful than dead ones—but moreover would possess as much real culture as the finest Latinist or Hellenist. When the partisans of the other point of view assert that there is no real culture without Latin and Greek, the newer theorists say that these languages formed the basis of culture at the time of the Renaissance, but that since then, other writers—French, German, English, Italian—have been studied that afford newer and more modern points of view, and therefore a newer and more efficient culture. It is a moot point concerning which discussions are still in progress between *Universitaires* and in the French Press to-day. What is quite certain is that the French Lycées aim at giving a good all-round instruction, with a general *aperçu* of all possible studies, so that if the student wishes later to

deepen his knowledge upon any particular point he may do so. I am told that in the English Universities Greek and Latin are studied far more deeply than in the French Universities, but the students of the English Universities form an *élite* of scholars apart, who are specialised Hellenists or Latinists, and cannot therefore be compared with students of the Lycées. Indeed, the whole trend of English education is towards the forming of a few exceptional and superior personalities, whereas the French educationists aim rather at forming a good general average.

The *Question du Latin* is no new one. It dates back as far as twenty years ago, when a professor—a certain Raoul Frary—raised the question as to whether it was worth the trouble and effort to acquire a little Latin and indifferent Greek, neither of which was of any practical use, since it was not deep enough for students to read classical authors in the original for their own pleasure once they had left the Lycée. Would it not be preferable, he asked, to devote the time and energy thus spent upon more immediately useful subjects? In those days many paterfamilias answered in the affirmative and promptly gave their sons over to the Ecole P[illegible]aire Supérieure, the curriculum of which is based

upon a course of modern languages, mathematics, and science, but no dead languages. But the boys thus educated have forcibly been considered outsiders in those sections of French society in which no man can be considered a gentleman who has not been well grounded in *Les Humanités*. And one is bound to admit to a certain extent the truth of this prejudice, for it is evident that there is always something lacking in the education of a man who does not possess at least a portion of this useless yet greatly prized knowledge. It will be observed that the more modern discussions concerning this vexed point differ somewhat from those of twenty years ago, inasmuch as the advocates of the 'No Latin' theory of to-day do not wish to do away with culture itself altogether by substituting a purely practical programme only. They have recognised the necessity of a higher aim in education than mere material issues. But they insist that the culture obtained from the study of writers of more modern languages, such as English, French, German, Italian, &c., is equal in quality to that based upon the older Greek or Latin authors.

Inspectors recruited from the ranks of the older and more experienced professors visit the Lycées at regular intervals, reporting upon all

the professors and their methods of teaching. These reports ultimately constitute a *dossier* of references for each individual *Universitaire*, by means of which he or she obtains his or her *avancement*. It goes without saying that no person in France is allowed to adopt the title of 'professor' who does not really hold a degree. It is impossible also for any establishment to call itself 'Academy,' or 'College,' or 'High School,' without authority for so doing, and no person, unless he be duly qualified to do so, is allowed to open an educational establishment of any kind.

The lecture hours in all boys' Lycées are from 8.30 to 11.30 a.m. and from 1.30 to 4.30 p.m. Boarders have at least an hour's study between 6.30 and 8 a.m., besides several hours later in the day after the lecture hours. They have no half-holidays, but Thursday is an entire 'off-day' each week. Holidays are short, two months being allotted to the Long Vacation, ten days at Easter, and three or four days at most at the *Jour de l'An*. There are seven special holidays of one day each throughout the year, Christmas Day being one of these. In a table published recently of the division of hours in a French Lycéen's days the following hours were stated :—

		PREPARATORY LYCÉE. (Boys of 5 to 12.)	LYCÉE.
Summer	Work ...	10 hours.	12 hours.
	Play ...	2 hours 55 min.	2½ hours.
	Sleep ...	9 hours.	8 hours.
Winter	Work ...	11 hours.	11½ hours.
	Play ...	3½ hours.	2 hours.
	Sleep ...	9½ hours.	9 hours.

The programmes of instruction at the Lycée being extremely detailed, but little time can be devoted to sports and outdoor games as in Anglo-Saxon countries. Although of late years there has been a decided effort made in favour of sports and outdoor games of all kinds among the youth of France, even with the official help of the Lycées, little has been so far achieved, if one compares results with those in Anglo-Saxon lands. French parents are extremely anxious that no time should be sacrificed to subjects which they consider unnecessary, in view of the important examinations which await all Lycéens at the end of their schooldays in preparation for some State career. For French education, cultured and refined though it be, has always one aim—the forming of State functionaries. And prudent French parents will always encourage their sons and daughters to choose

those professions which are connected with State appointments, which ensure perhaps but a mediocre salary, but are *sureties* for life and have pensions attached. Though they have fewer outdoor amusements, French students who leave school at seventeen or eighteen years of age are far better informed and better trained mentally than English schoolboys and girls of the same age. If one should stop any French boy between fifteen and sixteen years of age passing in the street and then question him upon various subjects and compare his answers with those of an English lad of corresponding years, it would be found that the French lad, pale-faced, overworked, intellectual, and even perhaps inclined to morbidity, would possess a greater stock of general knowledge upon all subjects and a decided taste for intellectual pursuits. And it would be found also, that the English boy would lack many mental acquirements, though he would probably be full of a blatant belief in his own superiority because of his proficiency in games. And the one and the other of these two boys are indicative of the national characteristics of each of their countries—neither attaining a real, well-balanced perfection of training, though a combination of the two systems of education might

and probably would give a perfect result. The French schoolboy's maturity is far in advance of that of the English boy, and not only does he express himself with more facility and clearness, but he grasps more readily than his English colleague the true gist of questions and with relative ease handles ideas that are purely abstract and philosophic, for his critical faculties are far more developed. This precocity is due both to the genius of the race and the home environment of the French schoolboy. Especially in Paris this is one of the main factors in the rapid intellectual development of French students of both sexes. The home in which they are brought up is relatively cultured, and their parents do not hesitate to discuss before them all the problems of the day. They are thus initiated when quite young in the art of speculative discussion. The atmosphere is not only an atmosphere of school lessons alternating with games, as is the English schoolboy's; it is the atmosphere of a cultured home. Questions of all kinds are discussed at the family table before the boys and girls attending the Lycées, except, of course, all questions relating to sex. School life has not the charm for French children which it necessarily has for the freer English student. The continual repression

which confines them to merely pedagogic interests and enforced discipline leads them to regard the Lycée as a place to which it is necessary to go to acquire knowledge, but which in itself is necessarily dull and rather *ennuyeux*. They therefore resign themselves with philosophy, but without enthusiasm.

In this intensive intellectual training given by the State Lycées there are two notable defects. One consists in the fact that as all educational programmes for all Lycées are the same all over the country, however excellent the quality of the teaching staff may be, the system produces rather an average of excellence than any originality of character or temperament. Indeed, any tendency towards originality is at once discouraged in a French Lycée, as it threatens to thwart the discipline and complete cohesiveness of the pedagogic programme. As the idea of French educationists is to produce a high general average, original personalities must forcibly be sacrificed. Except in very rare circumstances, it is difficult for the French schoolboy to develop any individuality, and in any case the process could not be begun until after the course of the Lycée were finished. This is indeed a great defect of the system, for by thwarting individual temperament personal initiative is also thus checked, and the

lack of this excellent quality is one of the most striking faults of French national character, and in the struggle of the nations might be found to be one of the chief reasons of France's comparative weakness.

The other great fault of the Lycée training, with its system of continual *surveillance*, is the lack of personal discipline which characterizes its pupils. It is probably because so much is thought of intellectual attainment that French teachers neglect the education of character among their pupils, though one must recognize that the Latin races, whose effervescence of natural spirits is greater than that of young Anglo-Saxons, require a stricter education of unrelaxed discipline. Unfortunately, French educators erroneously suppose that order can only be satisfactorily obtained by means of a constant and unrelenting control instead of by inculcating a sense of personal responsibility in each individual pupil. They evidently believe that discipline must be enforced from without instead of from within. Both in girls' and boys' Lycées, pupils are never allowed to be alone a single instant, and even when they leave one classroom for another, or a classroom for a playground, or the playground for an exit of the establishment, they

are always marshalled into line by a *maître répétiteur* or a *maîtresse répétitrice*, who conducts them in strict military order and silence through halls and passages from one point of the building to another. During study-hours, when preparing their work for the next day, they are also under the vigilant care of these unfortunate individuals—derisively called *pions*—who are themselves generally pupil-teachers preparing for their own degrees, and whose life is made a burden to them by their unruly charges. These policemen of the establishment—if one may so venture to call them—do not teach at all. They are there to maintain order only, and for no other reason. They do not even remain in the lecture-room during the *cours* of the professor, but make their appearance at the close of the lesson, on the stroke of the hour, like anxious shepherds seeking their wayward flocks. Thus from the hour of arrival till departure from the Lycée, pupils are never left alone for a single instant. Even their playgrounds are guarded by *pions*, posted in all corners of the enclosure to observe their conduct. Personal friendships between pupils are discouraged, especially among the girls, and although all sorts of simple games are allowed—in which many children take part, though all rough playing and romping

is forbidden—no two pupils are allowed to walk about the playground together or to talk intimately for long. Despite these restrictions, many friendships are formed at the Lycée which last all through life.

As a proof of the want of discipline among French schoolgirls, the following anecdote may be found, if not instructive, at least amusing. At the time when I was myself a professor at the Lycée Racine, I once tried an experiment to infuse into the minds of my pupils some rudimentary notions of self-discipline and self-government.

Although I was a professor and therefore had not to control the manners and behaviour of my pupils, I was myself fresh from an English college and was imbued with English ideas concerning the self-reliance and personal discipline advocated in English schools. As a lesson in conversational English, I began to explain to my pupils the methods of educational establishments in England. My class consisted of about forty girls, between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and for nearly half-an-hour I expatiated upon the superior personal discipline of English schoolgirls and upon the comparatively lax superintendence of English classrooms. I told them that in England, when girls of their own age were 'put upon their honour' not to be unruly and to

behave themselves in a decorous and dignified manner when not under the direct control of their instructresses, they could be entirely relied upon to keep their word and to behave themselves as they should.

My pupils were greatly interested, and were charmed with the idea of the freedom enjoyed by their more fortunate English sisters. Fired with enthusiasm, several of them declared, speaking for their comrades as well as for themselves, that if they themselves were not continually being managed and restrained by a *maîtresse répétitrice* ever at their heels, they also could be depended upon to behave themselves.

At first I was incredulous, but after their many repeated assertions I resolved to put them to the test.

'Very well,' I said, 'I am going to give you a chance to prove the truth of what you advance. I am quite willing to believe that you will show yourselves in every way worthy of my confidence. I hope that you understand that according to the rules of this establishment I am making a very bold innovation. I am now going to put you "upon your honour" to behave exactly as if I were sitting at my desk, present here in person, while I go out of the room for five minutes. When I return I shall be able to

judge if you can be trusted to keep your word!'

I left my rostrum, and opening the high glass door that led on to the corridor, went out of the classroom.

Now, I knew fully what I was undertaking, and realized that all my direct chiefs would have blamed me greatly for attempting this probation. But I was resolved to give the girls a fair chance. Instead of remaining out of the room but five minutes, I stayed ten minutes in the Professors' Library on the floor above the classroom.

Now probably my pupils considered that their honour could be relied upon for five minutes' duration, but that ten minutes' restraint was really too much to ask; for after my departure the youngsters presumably had waited for five minutes in perfect order, but after that time had evidently considered that 'time was up.' For long before I could reach the top of the corridor, upon my return, I could both see and hear through the glass doors that the classroom was in a terrible uproar. The portals of other lecture-rooms all along the passage were being furtively and cautiously opened, one after another, and anxious professors were inquiring whether a revolution were taking place in the vicinity! As I reached the room, several girls were standing on the

desks, pelting their comrades with bits of india-rubber, torn papers, rulers, pencils, and even inkpots. Others in picturesque groups about the classroom were cleverly aiming heavy volumes at each other's heads. Loose papers were flying in all directions, while rivers of ink were streaming over the floor. Two ingenious creatures, posted at the opposite ends of the room, had rapidly manufactured an amateur telephone by means of a very long string and two cardboard discs cut out of the covers of an exercise book, and were now engaged upon testing the efficiency of their apparatus. The noise was deafening ; and now close upon my heels followed my anxious colleagues from the other neighbouring class-rooms, peeping cautiously over my shoulder to discover the origin of the unearthly cries and vociferations that, issuing forth from the open windows, had aroused the whole building. As I opened the door of the classroom, the young monkeys seemed suddenly to have remembered their 'word of honour'—though too late, alas! Angry though I was, it was with difficulty that I refrained from laughing, for at the mere sight of me each girl had stopped in the very midst of her action, and remained fixedly gazing at me, in silent, amazed horror, reminding me, in spite of myself, of the courtiers who suddenly fell

asleep in fixed attitudes at the Castle of the Sleeping Beauty when the Princess pricked her hand with the spinning-wheel!

But I remained stern, solemn and portentously silent. For a few breathless moments a dead silence pervaded the room. Furtively, they had all resumed their seats and pulled themselves into position again, and I could see that they were breathlessly awaiting my words. When at last I addressed them, I said, very quietly, and with an accent of finality not to be discussed: '*Mes enfants, vous voyez que vous n'êtes pas dignes de posséder la liberté!*'

I think that that affected them more than anything else I could have said, for I saw several tears rolling down flushed cheeks and being furtively wiped away; but none made any answer.

An ominous silence reigned for some moments. Then I spoke again.

'Considering your conduct, young ladies, the whole class deserves a *six de conduite.*' (Now this is the very worst punishment possible, because a conduct mark of *six*—the full necessary number being *ten*—excludes the pupil so punished from being inscribed upon the *Tableau d'Honneur* at the end of the month, however excellent her schoolwork may be, and at the end of the year a single *six de conduite* debars the delinquent

from being presented with any kind of prize.) The look of consternation and disappointment on the faces of the naughty girls before me was dreadful to behold, and a sigh of despair vibrated through the room—for nearly all were striving to obtain the distinction of the *Tableau d'Honneur*. Yet I pursued : 'I will not do this, however' (a sigh of relief now trembled through the horrified silence), 'because I do not think it fair to punish you for my own foolhardy venture. I might have known that it would not succeed. But I cannot say that I hold you in very high esteem!'

There were a few more gulps and sobs and furtive tears, to which I apparently paid no attention, and I resumed the subject of my *cours*. When the hour had come for the end of the lecture, I allowed them to file off two by two towards the *maîtresse répétitrice*, who beyond the glass doors of the corridor was waiting to conduct them to another lecture. I made no further allusion to the incident, and they departed in shamefaced silence, with bowed heads, merely saluting me as they passed out of the room.

Thus ended my experiment.

V

A GIRLS' 'LYCÉE'

WHEN the earlier Republicans founded the third Republic after the fall of the Empire, they decided that the Frenchwoman should henceforth be considered as an intelligent creature, capable of being intellectually drilled, like the men of her country, and a Bill was passed to establish Lycées for girls on the same plan as Lycées or State Colleges for boys.

These Lycées belong to the State, the appointments of the professors being directly under the control of the French University, which appoints also the *Directrice* and pays her salary, as well as the salaries of the professors. The actual buildings of the Lycées are State property and pay no rent. The fees of the students of the Lycées, which are very low, contribute only about a third of the total expenses of the establishments.

When girls' Lycées were first instituted

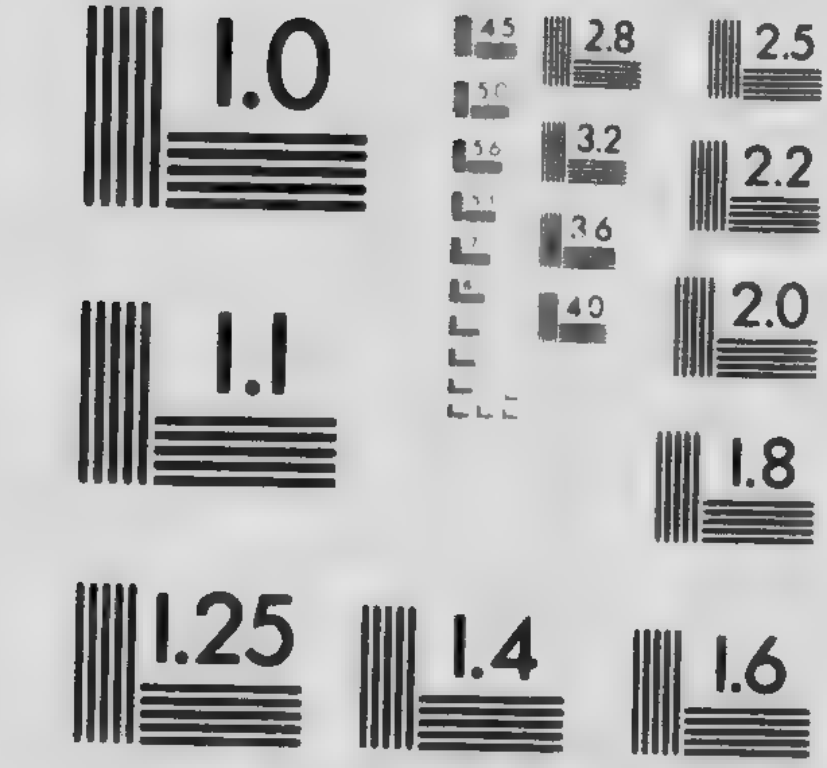
they were few in number and met with great opposition from the partisans of the convents, for among French families there was still a great feeling against the godless Lycée training for the French *jeune fille*. Even those parents who long before had allowed their sons to attend the boys' Lycées, and thus grow up without religious teaching at school, seemed to think it necessary that, whatever their brothers might do, the girls of the family—probably, because destined to become French wives, they would need much fortitude of spirit—must be brought up on religious principles. Hence the great prejudice against the Lycées, where no religion is taken into account, and where Catholics, Protestants, and Jewesses are admitted promiscuously.

But of late years the prejudice has largely subsided, and as most of the religious teaching communities have been expelled from France, the result has been that large numbers of pupils have flocked to the girls' Lycées, and a great number of these State colleges for women have been opened all over France. There are five or six such Lycées in Paris now, the larger ones of which receive from six to seven hundred pupils. Here the programmes of studies drawn up by the Superior Council of Educa-

HALF-PAST ELEVEN IN THE MORNING AT THE DOOR OF THE LYCÉE RACINE.
(The *sortie* of the Pupils.)
From the special drawing by Frederic Regamey.

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

tion at the Ministry of Public Instruction are similar—though with some important modifications—to those of boys' Lycées, the principal item suppressed from the boys' programme being Greek and Latin.

For several years I held the post of Professor of English at the Lycée Racine, which I will try to describe here.

It is a large white edifice of modern *Art Nouveau* architecture, built of stone and adorned with large windows of painted glass, and occupying the space between the Rue du Rocher and the Rue de Rome, near the Gare Saint-Lazare. As in all State buildings, over each entrance a French flag waves in the breeze, and just beneath it, in gold mosaic lettering, the words 'Lycée Racine' can be read. The entrance upon the Rue du Rocher has a handsome and imposing aspect. It is almost exclusively reserved for the professors and those ladies who belong to the administration. These are: *Madame la Directrice*, *Madame la Surveillante Générale*, *Madame l'Econome* (Treasurer), and her assistants. Besides, there are a batch of servants attached to the establishment, including a *chef* who provides an excellent luncheon for the half-boarders remaining at the Lycée the whole day, at the modest sum of 11½d.

The entrance upon the Rue de Rome is less imposing than that upon the Rue du Rocher, and is more generally used by the younger students, although many professors also enter by that door when convenient. A passer-by might observe, at regular intervals during the day, a variety of distinguished-looking ladies, more or less addicted to the wearing of eye-glasses, but all pleasant-looking and well-dressed, entering the building by the principal entrance; while, at the same time, other observers might note flocks of girls of all sizes and ages entering by the door on the Rue de Rome, always attended by a lady in charge or a maid, and invariably carrying beneath their arms weighty black-leather portfolios crammed full of school-books. These are French schoolgirls, and whatever may be their accoutrement as they enter the college, some moments later they will all be transformed into demure little damsels robed uniformly in black overalls. The pleasant spectacled ladies are of course their professors.

The Paris Lycées are not residential, though most of the provincial Lycées are. Those which do not admit boarders generally possess a sort of informal *internat* or hostel, kept by ladies who are authorized by the Lycée staff to board and lodge the students of the establish-

ment. At Versailles, for instance, there is a very fine *internat* founded by the professors themselves, who have thus invested their savings and formed an Associated Company, which yields them regular profits.

The Lycée Racine receives no boarders, but the officials of the establishment—the *Directrice*, the *Surveillante Générale* and the *Econome*—are housed there. Each has a complete private flat of her own within the building. On the top floor are half a dozen bed-sitting-rooms, which are at the disposal of those younger *maîtresses répétitrices* who prepare their higher examinations during their spare hours, and whose homes are too far from the Lycée for their convenience. It is entirely a matter of choice as to whether these shall be housed in the Lycée or not, no charge being made for their accommodation.

At the Lycée Racine there is a Preparatory Course, which admits pupils at the age of five, and which delivers a sort of Kindergarten teaching. The *Cours Primaire* receives pupils from nine to twelve, and the pupils of the *Cours Secondaire*—or upper classes—are between the ages of twelve and twenty.

Pupils may prepare for the examinations of the Paris Municipality or the Sorbonne, or for

entrance to the Normal Colleges. The Lycée itself grants two special diplomas to the pupils, after special examination—one at the age of fourteen, the other at the age of eighteen—which rank as equivalent to the *Brevet Simple* and the *Brevet Supérieur* of the Paris Municipality, thus equipping them for the posts of junior teachers.

A visitor at the Lycée Racine will find it a well-designed, airy, and pleasant building. It is three stories high, and has two staircases. The front staircase, for the exclusive use of the authorities, is carpeted and made beautiful with artistic decoration; the back staircase of plain, uncarpeted oak, is for the use of students. Upon each floor the staircases are connected by a long passage, with a mosaic floor and painted walls, to which all the classrooms, with high glass doors, have access. These classrooms have wide windows opening on to the inner court and admitting all possible light and air; the court serves as playground. Each classroom is provided with benches and a high rostrum for the professor, and is heated by central steam-heating. A magnificent reference library is provided for the professors, where they can read and converse between the classes.

On the ground floor is a huge covered-in playground for use in wet weather, and a gymnasium, as well as a well-stocked infirmary. There is also a huge refectory, where the students take their luncheon. A good plain meal, consisting of eggs or fish, meat, vegetables and sweets, with red wine, is served every day, at a charge of 11½d. per head. The kitchens beneath are under the supervision of an excellent *chef*, paid by the institution, who does the catering. Every day the *menu* for the repast is brought to the *Directrice* for her approval, a special condition being that it should be as varied as possible.

Class hours begin at 8.30 in the morning and last till 11.30. They begin again at 1.30 and last till 3.30. But these are merely the hours of lectures; there are study hours as well. Those of the children who do their preparation work at home leave at 3.30. Others—the *élèves surveillées*—remain at the Lycée to prepare their home lessons until 5.30, under the superintendence of a *maîtresse répétitrice*, whose business—as has already been explained—is not to teach, but to keep order in the classes during study hours, to attend to the welfare of the children, giving occasional advice or help, and to march the pupils from one classroom to another for the professors' lectures.

These *maîtresses répétitrices* are not in possession of their full degrees, and are generally preparing for these while they mount guard over their classes.

The Lycée, which is closed on Thursdays and Sundays, admits three classes of students—day pupils, of two kinds, *externes simples* and *externes surveillées*, half-boarders and free pupils.

Day pupils (*externes simples*) merely attend the *cours* of the professors and remain in the Lycée only during lecture hours—*i.e.*, from 8.30 to 11.30 a.m. and 1.30 to 3.30 p.m.

The second division—or *externes surveillées*—remain in the Lycée till 5.30 p.m. to prepare their home-lessons after the lectures are over. They go home to lunch. The half-boarders—who are of both classes—remain in the Lycée the whole day, from 8.30 a.m. till 5.30 p.m., and have both lunch and *goûter*—a simple repast consisting of bread and chocolate—at 4 p.m. in the establishment. They receive all stationery free.

Free pupils—*élèves libres*—are those who, by arrangement, attend but a few special lectures. They are considered as *externes simples* and pay the same fees, but they may not compete for the diplomas granted by the Lycée.

When several children (boys and girls) of the same family attend several State Lycées, the

collective fees may be reduced by 12½ per cent. of the total sum paid by the parents of the family.

Every three months the Lycées are visited by qualified inspectors, appointed by the Minister of Public Education and recruited from the ranks of old and experienced professors. No amount of family influence, or indeed influence of any kind—or even public service of any but an educational kind—could help to obtain one of these appointments. The Inspector must be thoroughly qualified in every way by the personal experience of a long career for the Inspectorship of a Public School.

The College itself is presided over by a Lady Directress, aided by a General Superintendent. The duties of the Directress are solely to assure the comfort and convenience of the pupils and professors, and to compose and arrange the time-table of the lectures, with the aid of the professors themselves. She receives the parents of the pupils, and satisfies herself that everything is in good working order. But she has nothing to do with the actual course of instruction. The finances are administered by the Treasurer (*Economе*), whose office is on the first floor, and who receives the fees of the parents and pays the salaries of the entire establishment. As has been said before, the fees are very low, the college being supported

by the State, and the idea of the promoters being to keep classical education within the means of all families except the very poor.

Here is a list of the fees paid by the various classes of students :—

Designation.	Day Scholars who merely attend Lectures.	Day Scholars who prepare their Home Lessons at the Lycée.	Half-boarders.
	£	£	£
Primary Classes - -	8	14	24
Secondary Classes { 1st Period	10	16	28
Secondary Classes { 2nd Period	12	18	32

Per annum.

An excellent result of this general bringing together of the daughters of all classes is that it suppresses the worst kind of social prejudice amongst the pupils—the daughter of a duke or of a Cabinet Minister being on exactly the same footing as the daughter of a small tradesman. A charming story was told me at the Lycée Racine while I was there. In one of my classes there were two little girls of twelve years old—Jeanne and Louise—who had become very dear bosom friends. Walking home together with their respective escorts, they or day discovered that they both lived

in the same building, which happened to be that part of the Palace of the Louvre occupied by the Ministry of Finance.

'Do you mean to say that you live here?' asked Jeanne of Louise.

'Yes, my papa is the usher to the Minister,' said Louise in the most simple manner possible and without the slightest confusion.

'Oh!' exclaimed Jeanne, 'how funny! My papa is the Minister!'

The next morning, as the Minister passed his usher in the ante-chamber, he stopped and said:

'I hear that your daughter and mine attend the same Lycée. It might save your wife two journeys a day, if the maid who accompanies my little girl brought yours back with mine. Mention it to your wife and let it be arranged in that way.'

Such is the Republican spirit that prevails in French Lycées.

VI

THE FRENCHWOMAN

FRANCE is pre-eminently the country of women, as among the nations she is pre-eminently the feminine nation of the world. The most characteristic qualities of the French race are essentially feminine qualities. In Politics, Arts, Literature, and Commerce, as well as in social life, the woman-influence is everywhere, though it is not so flagrantly apparent as it is occultly felt. It is the mothers of France who form the souls of the men of France, and the best and greatest Frenchmen have ever possessed as many of the higher feminine qualities as of the nobler masculine ones.

The special characteristics of the French—artistic culture and artistic taste—are in a certain degree the result of the cult of Woman in France. For it is that very cult which demands qualities of taste and refinement. It will be noticed that the principal industries and exports of the

country consist of articles made chiefly for women—and indeed are largely manufactured by women themselves. The silks and woollen goods from Lyons and the North of France, the feminine knicknacks of luxury for the household and for women's use known as '*articles de Paris*,' the artificial flowers, chiffons, laces, millinery, sent from Paris all over the civilized world, are designed and made for women's *parure* and beauty. Paris is the millinery shop of the world and is the very centre of all those arts which seek to enhance the beauty and charm of woman. As Art primarily grew out of man's love and desire for woman, French thought, art and life is still centred in the religion of the *éternel féminin*. This cult of her feminine attributes has made the Frenchwoman the feminine woman *par excellence*, and—even in spite of her brains—it is ever through her influence as a *woman* that the Frenchwoman reigns supreme over the men of her country. The highest compliment a Frenchman can make his wife, sister, friend, or any woman, is to say of her that she is '*bien femme*,' and the most intellectual woman in the world would not have the power to convince or interest any man, born in this land of France, did she not possess that special quality so essential in his appreciation

tion. For this reason, it might almost be said that the Frenchwoman has made her femininity a *business.* I mean this in the better sense. She has cultivated it and made of it a true and preponderant force.

The influence of woman in France acts differently to the woman-influence of other nations. Though the Frenchwoman is in a measure greatly modelled by the man she loves, in reality the Frenchman is still more influenced by his wife than any other man. But she only affects him—and is only able to affect him —through her own and his own inherent femininity. Indeed, as one has always the defects of one's virtues, the very fault of the Frenchwoman may be her excessive femininity. At times it may appear to be too overpowering, and when exaggerated transforms her into an unbalanced, oversensitized and sometimes morally oversexed creature, making of her a woman of too intense feeling, too easily wounded, and occasionally, because of this excess of sentimentality, somewhat difficult to live with.

Politically, women in France—though they have no recogn ized power—may indirectly wield great influence. In the provinces even the peasant women very often tell their husbands how to vote ; in the towns—more especially in social circles,

by means of their *salons*—the influence of women as a political factor is immense. But even in politics the woman's power is subtly temperamental, and affects the masculine mind rather through a process of assimilation than by any conscious sense of domination. There is nothing distinctly assertive about the Frenchwoman, for she *apparently* has no virile qualities of will and determination. When she does possess them, she carefully conceals them, never allowing them to be apparent upon the surface. Her power lies exclusively in what men call her womanly charm, which in reality is her intense faculty for the sympathetic assimilation of the ideas and even the passions and emotions of others. Even when she does convince by the mere force of her sterling common sense, her manner of conviction is never directly aggressive, never offensive, and those whom she influences the most, often do not realize that they are being controlled by her. And this apparent self-effacement of the woman is not the result of duplicity. It is the direct outcome of the early training she has received. She has been so taught to be subservient to the men of her family and to her eventual husband, that even when she is strong-brained and strong-willed she is almost unconscious of her own superiority,

and never seems to rejoice in the possession of it.

The French *jeune fille*, the incipient woman, is apparently an artificial creature. But her artificiality is only on the outside. Beneath it the character of the woman is awake, awaiting its hour of freedom—marriage—after which the young woman may allow her restrained energies to spring into more active life. Her prudent mother has brought her up with the idea that her husband shall form her to his own liking—for this conception of the husband-teacher seems to be one of the most deeply rooted convictions of the Frenchman—though not necessarily of the Frenchwoman. Indeed, the woman of the future will have much to do to eradicate this image from his mind, for this notion in the Frenchman's mind is so strong that the whole process of a girl's education must not teach her to develop her personality, but must, on the contrary, tend to preserve her soul as a white sheet upon which her husband shall write his fiat later. Thus she holds, if not her intelligence, at least her will in abeyance until her marriage, and that is why she is so intensely, so eagerly assimilative afterwards. This conception of the young and uninitiated wife, which holds the imagination of the Frenchman so firmly, appears at first to be the more

astonishing that it is precisely the more experienced women who generally influence him the most. But nearly always, when a Frenchman marries, he has flown to matrimony in a sort of revulsion of feeling against the too clever and sophisticated feminine creatures who may have victimized him. This causes him to seek the exact opposite in his wife. Hence one of the reasons—the most potent reason—for the artificial training of the French girl.

Yet, though seemingly so supine, the French girl generally knows what she wants, and though apparently ever-yielding, she nearly always attains eventually the object of her desire. '*Ce que femme veut, Dieu veut*,' is essentially a French saying.

Of course there is a type of Frenchwoman whom we have all known in literature as well as in life—the type known in France as *la maîtresse-femme*—the aggressive, domineering, experienced, wise woman who has learned how to manage both men and women. But it will be noticed that the Frenchwoman generally assumes this character only with advance in years. One will rarely find a young and attractive woman with these attributes. The Frenchwoman knows that her strength lies essentially in her power of charm, and it is only when youth has fled that she will seek to dominate with her will. Mothers-in-

law are generally of this type of women, and those women who have wielded great power in their own *salon* for many years and who treat their *habitués* as children. But as there is a great regard for age and experience in France, the *maîtresse-femme* is often a strong power to be reckoned with in a family.

As I have already said—one cannot say it too often—a Frenchman never has a better friend than his wife, and no better counsellor. He confides all his troubles to her—business ones and others. She is a true helpmate and never falls to the level of so many Anglo-Saxon wives of the middle-classes, who often know nothing at all of their husbands' business and are merely upper servants in their own households. Although marriages are made by parents, and the contracting parties at the moment of their union often have little or no opinion to offer in the matter of choice, yet there are a great many happy couples in France—precisely because of the assimilative qualities of the Frenchwoman.

It is very difficult for the women of Anglo-Saxon countries to understand Frenchwomen, or indeed any women of the Latin races, whose training is so entirely different to their own. In a new country like America, for instance, where there were no barriers erected by the traditions of an

older civilization to overthrow, women practically took their position in society on a moral equality with men. In England, although there still exist many barriers of customs, traditions, and prejudice yet to be overthrown, young girls are allowed far more social liberty than French girls, insomuch as they have to seek and find their husbands for themselves. And if Anglo-Saxon women are inclined to judge the Frenchwomen as too feminine, Frenchwomen themselves are inclined to consider that what the women of Anglo-Saxon countries have gained in character they have lost in charm. When a Frenchwoman has individual character—which is often the case—her first endeavour is to conceal that fact, lest it should be considered detrimental to her feminine attraction. Thus while the women of England and America are respected, the women of France are adored and, rightly or wrongly, the greater mass of Frenchwomen wish to retain that general adoration of their sex.

Every human being can be considered from two points of view—the entirely sympathetic one or the severely critical one. From one standpoint the Frenchwoman may be considered frivolous, and from the other quite the reverse. In reality, she is frivolous only in externals, and

indeed gives herself great trouble to attain this end. Those who know how to observe her—and who themselves possess the necessary knowledge which enables them to form a competent judgment—soon realize that her apparent frivolity is assumed in order to please the men she has to live with. One might be tempted to quote here the sapient Mrs. Poyser, who declared with some truth that 'When God made women so foolish, He made them to match the men!' In no country does this apply so well, in a certain sense, as in France. It is very evident that the Frenchwoman is in many ways a far more able creature and has far higher ideals than the partner whose prejudices she is often too inclined to humour. And though I should not wish to be accused of making a paradox, I think it might safely be said that the finest men of France are the women. This does not mean that Frenchmen are necessarily frivolous in all ways, but their standard of womanhood is certainly lower than that of the women themselves. To please a man and to manage him, a Frenchwoman is often obliged to play a part, so as to frame in with his rather artificial self-made ideal. Happily, the newer education of women is doing much to alter men's views on women in general, and it has ever been

LA PARISIENNE.
From the painting by A. de la Gandara.

evident in France that the higher the type of man, the higher is his appreciation of woman and of her work and efforts—and the higher, too, the standard he sets for all women. I have been interested to learn from long and continued personal investigation that most of our greater representative men—politicians, writers, artists, and thinkers of all kinds—are entirely feminist in their views.

Yet though she is educated from her earliest youth with the idea that she must please her husband in every way and fashion herself to his liking, yet, in moments of great stress, when firm decision is necessary, no woman can be more personally heroic than the Frenchwoman. In France alone have there been such women as Jeanne d'Arc, Jeanne Hachette, Charlotte Corday, Madame Roland, and many others, not to mention those who throughout history have pulled the wires of all political, literary, and social affairs. There is no more capable or resourceful woman than the Frenchwoman in the moments of trouble, and it is very rare to find one stranded in life, because she can generally turn her hand to anything, and do that anything well. Within my own experience I have both heard and known of many women who, from one day to another, after some great

financial loss, have become excellent business women, cashiers, clerks, dressmakers, milliners, &c., who when it has been necessary have managed to acquire the requisite technical knowledge with facility and ability. It is very rarely that one sees in France the helpless incompetent woman who can turn her hand to nothing, having never learned to do one single thing well. Adaptable and energetic, a Frenchwoman can do most things in the most efficient manner possible. Even if she only knows cookery or housekeeping, her knowledge will be thorough of its kind. The French as a nation are excellent and thorough artisans, which is exemplified by the success and superiority they achieve precisely in such arts as cooking and dressmaking—in which perfection is a question of degree and attention to detail. The essential quality of so simple a dish as mashed potatoes, for instance—done well or done ill—is merely a question of attention to detail, just as the difference between the work of a small sempstress who makes a blouse indifferently well and the work of the great *faiseur* of the Rue de la Paix, whose productions are so exquisitely and so artistically complete, is again but a difference consisting in minute details of finish and taste. The mashed potatoes of the good cook and of the

bad cook, like the blouse of the good dressmaker and of the bad one, are cooked and cut on precisely the same lines—but the work put into them is a question of degree in care and precision. Now this principle of applied attention to details and finish is strongly established in the mind of the Frenchwoman—that is why she is an excellent housekeeper, cook, and dressmaker. And the principle existing in all branches of her activity, everything she produces is excellent of its kind. Her knowledge is never scrappy, and what she knows she knows consummately.

She is versatile also. When I was professor at the Lycée Racine there were about forty women professors on the staff, and of these some twenty were married women, whose salaries as *agrégées* varied from 3,000 to 4,000 francs per annum. Their husbands for the most part were clerks in governmental service, whose salaries were 1,800 to 2,000 francs. The wives were therefore the principal breadwinners of the family. Yet they performed their duties as breadwinners, wives, mothers, and housekeepers admirably. Several had babies, whom they nursed themselves, having them brought to them at regular stated hours at the Lycée, between their *cours*. Upon their return home, after a whole day

spent at the Lycée, they would furbish themselves up and make themselves look quite fresh and attractive to receive their husbands upon their return later from their office work. Often a specially tasty dish might be cooked for dinner by the wife herself, to please her husband's fastidious palate. And often again, after dinner, this admirable wage-earner would don an evening gown and attend some official function with her husband, as charmingly dressed a *femme du monde* as any!

And Frenchwomen are not only individually versatile. You will find them employed in all kinds of work in France, within doors and out of doors. Among the peasantry, women will work in the fields side by side with men, and the greater industries of France, which make her renown and success, such as wine-growing, silk-weaving, &c., owe as much to the industry of the women as to that of the men. In all the factories you will find women in equal number with the men. In Paris they drive taxi-cabs and motors, sell papers in the streets, deliver tickets at the stations. They are employed as gate-keepers by the railway companies, and will be seen standing at level crossings, holding the red flag, along all the railroads of France. In the ministries and the large State banks, &c., women are largely

employed as typists, clerks, &c. I once heard a Minister of Finance declare that he would far prefer that the 80,000 Inland Revenue officers of France should be women instead of men. He declared that the work would be just as efficiently executed by them, perhaps even better, and that one of the most ordinary delinquencies of the *percepteur*—that of decamping with the State funds—would probably be obviated. I remember, despite my feminist convictions, having remarked that women, too, might be tempted to make off with the money which they had collected. But he replied: "No, there would be no danger of that. When men rob the State coffers, it is generally because of some worthless female. No woman would act so foolishly on account of a worthless man!"

In the country, women often attend to the cattle, horses, and farms, and do most of the men's farm-work also. A great many wives and daughters of working men help their men in their various trades. I remember once having my country cottage repapered and repainted. After giving the order to be executed to the house-painter, I returned a few weeks later to see how the work was progressing, and found to my astonishment that the entire job had been undertaken by the wife of the painter, who had

probably considered it too small an affair for his own master-hand. It appears that she was her husband's best workman and undertook all the regular work of the lesser houses in the district.

But what is necessary to bear in mind is that although Frenchwomen succeed in various careers, hitherto they have rarely been *trained* for them. They have generally been forced into the new business by circumstances, and here again their faculty for assimilation serves them. More often it is a widow left with responsibilities in the shape of young children to bring up who undertakes to continue her husband's work, or at other times a daughter who has worked with her father and learned his trade. In the North of France I know a woman tanner who employs seven hundred workmen. She is the widow of a tanner and learned the trade during her husband's last long illness. In the next town is a woman glass-manufacturer, who also employs several hundred workmen; she too took up her husband's business after his death. But of late years, women have been qualifying themselves largely for those new intellectual careers which have been thrown open to them. Side by side with their masculine comrades, Frenchwomen have shown themselves

so able, so efficient, that they even have begun to inspire man with a feeling of rivalry. For instance, at the Sorbonne, where women and men compete together at the *concours* of the *agrégation*, for several years running the names of women headed the list of the successful competitors. This so infuriated their masculine comrades that, in order to save their hurt vanity and pride, it was decided by the authorities of the Sorbonne that henceforth—although the examination remained identical for the two sexes and the women still competed with the men—there should be two separate lists made for the successful candidates—a woman's list and a man's list. *Sans commentaires!*

It is interesting to note that although women compete with men in all their examinations and in all State appointments, the women who are eventually appointed to any State function enjoy a much lower salary than their men colleagues. A rising Deputy, Monsieur Louis Marin, has just brought forward a Bill tending to equalize the salaries of both sexes. This is a sign of the times.

Of late years a newer and higher education for women has been inaugurated in France, bringing with it a new spirit since the days when the French Republic first decreed, some

twenty or twenty-five years ago, that women were intelligent animals, capable of acquiring a mental equipment; and here again the marvellous assimilative qualities of the Frenchwoman have become wonderfully apparent. The French girl has taken to knowledge well, and in point of actual learning has already far outstripped the college-trained girl of any other country, not merely because of her natural aptitude, but also because she devotes more time to her studies, her education being still so far traditional that she has not yet been allowed to romp with young men of her age in pursuit of sport, and has devoted her time entirely to her studies, often, alas! to the detriment of her physical development. Indeed, a new type of *jeune fille*, hitherto unknown in France, is slowly being elaborated. I do not say that the type is generalized yet, but there are many signs that it will soon be a factor to be reckoned with in French families. In advanced social circles one meets the emancipated French *jeune fille* often, and in literature and on the stage quite as frequently. The *jeune fille* in one of Capus's last plays—*L'Aventurier*—is entirely of this type, and I could mention twenty others. She is a far more advanced and civilized product than was the convent girl. At the Lycée she

has learned mathematics, physical science, chemistry, natural history, and various modern and ancient languages, and intellectually she is well equipped for the battle of life. Her general knowledge is far greater, far more solid, and far more cohesive than that of the young English girl of her own age.

But the French girl, like the Frenchwoman, never loses her femininity, despite all her culture and intellectual training. It is always her strongest weapon, and all her culture, all the superior knowledge that she has gained for herself in the study of books, only helps her to develop and strengthen her femininity the more, and to make her a more adaptable being, more intellectually conscious of herself. We never see in France that type so familiar in Anglo-Saxon countries, the highly-educated intellectual woman whose womanhood seems to have been atrophied or crushed out of her in the process of development of her brain. During my eight years of professorship in a girls' Lycée, I was well able to study the various characteristics of the pupils between the ages of ten and twenty, and it was always very interesting to note the conscious dawn of feminine coquetry that began to arise in them at about the ages of fifteen or sixteen. All French schoolgirls, of whatever rank or position, whether

they be in the Municipal Schools or the Lycées, wear a long black overall, made either of linen or alpaca, provided with long sleeves that button at the wrist, and a square yoke at the neck, from which the material at the back and front falls in long pleats to the feet. This is fastened behind and literally covers the wearer from the neck to the feet. The fullness is confined at the waist by a band of the same material or by a black-leather belt. Now it was always interesting to note how this garment was arranged and worn by each pupil. Little girls buttoned it roughly and had the belt quite loose round their waists, but when they grew to fourteen or fifteen years of age, they put on their *sarrau* with more care and began to draw in the belt, and arrange the pleats around their waists with critical taste and care. Thus I learnt that even a black-linen overall can become a thing of elegance and charm! I never could catch a glimpse of my pupils' gowns, but I always found the *sarrau* sufficiently indicative of the girls' coquetry, as well as the way in which the hair was dressed. The girls who still had the souls of children let their hair hang simply in a long plait, but those whose incipient femininity was dawning took infinite pains to turn up the plait with ribbon and fancy pins, till it looked like a real *coiffure de dame*.

In the older days the parents chose the possible husband for their daughter, and only allowed her to see him when all the necessary information concerning him had been obtained. But now, according to the new dispensation, it often happens that the *jeune fille* whose wits are fully alert chooses her own *fiancé* in a *salon* from among the group of young men whom, like in the better class English shops, she may 'look at but not touch.' Then she informs her parents of her choice. But she does not go so far as to tell the young man her intentions herself. Nor does she even hint at them. She keeps her eyelids demurely lowered while in his presence, but she points him out to her careful and well-trained mother, and says: 'That is the man I want. Please get him for me!'

For the last twenty years the Municipal Schools and the Lycées — the Primary and Secondary Educational Colleges — under the direction of the State, have prepared French girls for diplomas and Sorbonne degrees, thus creating a whole army of *rebelles* — as they have been so aptly called by Marcelle Tinayre, the writer. These declare that they will no longer allow themselves to be held in thrall to the family and fashioned for those problematic husbands, who will only take them as wives

if they have a dowry. These are now preparing themselves for various liberal careers, in which they have already achieved marvellous and unprecedented success. France is still the only European country where a woman barrister may go into court and defend a case on equal grounds with a man, Madame Petit and Mademoiselle Jeanne Chauvin being the first who were admitted to the Law Courts several years ago. There are now more than a dozen women barristers practising in Paris. Of women doctors, there are seventy in Paris doing admirable work, and specializing in women's and children's complaints. There are also eighteen women dentists, ten oculists, and half a dozen chemists. On the teaching staff of the girls' Lycées, of which there are six in Paris, and one in each of the large towns of France, there are now many hundreds of women who have taken their degrees at the Sorbonne with their masculine colleagues, and are now making names for themselves in the University, as has been said before. Many of these have been appointed on examining committees, and on Extra-Parliamentary Educational Councils at the Ministry of Public Instruction. Of women writers there are more than ever in France doing good work, several of whom are already decorated with the

THE FRENCH MOTHER AT HOME.
From a special drawing by Frédéric Régamey.

Légion d'Honneur. It must also be remembered that this year a woman writer, Madame Judith Gautier, was elected a member of the Académie des Goncourt, and the question of women being elected as members of the Académie Française had already been discussed when Madame Curie recently entered her name as a competitor to a vacant *fauteuil* at the Académie des Sciences and won no less than twenty-eight votes out of thirty. It must not be forgotten, either, that more than ten years ago the daily newspaper entirely run by women, not onl written, but printed and entirely managed by women, was started, called *La Fronde*, which practically opened the new career of journalism to women, so that now, on almost every paper of importance in France, women are employed on the staff as reporters, *chroniqueurs*, &c. One celebrated woman journalist, Madame Séverine, has earned as much as 100,000 francs a year with her pen.

Women artists, of whom there are about three thousand in all in France to-day, not including those engaged in the industrial arts, are far more numerous and successful than in the days of Madame Vigée Le Brun and Rosa Bonheur. Such women as Madeleine Lemaire, Louise Abbéma, Hélène Dufau, Madame Dumont Breton, &c., can testify to the truth of this.

Of women sculptors there are no less than one hundred in France of repute.

In the industrial arts, such as designing for textile fabrics, china, house-decoration, jewellery, leather-work, &c., large numbers of women are earning important salaries in France. In commerce Frenchwomen have always been renowned. They are wonderful managers and business women. The Bon Marché, established on a co-operative basis, was founded and managed by Madame Boucicaut, as all the world knows. Nearly all the *petit commerce* in Paris is in the hands of women, and I have already told you about one *lingère* in the Rue du Sentier who makes 40,000 francs a year out of her business, and who employs her own husband as a cashier at a salary of £100 a year.

There are about fifty women owners or editors of papers, gazettes, reviews, or magazines, and considerably more engaged in journalism. According to the lists published by the Société des Gens de Lettres, there are over two hundred writers in France earning from four to twenty thousand francs a year. There are 117,000 women *fonctionnaires* in France altogether, including the Post Office and Telephone contingent. The primary educational schools employ 60,000, the secondary schools between 1,500

and 2,c The Assistance Publique employs 4,000 women, and there are now twenty inspectresses and more at the Ministry of Commerce.

There is no material or intellectual work in France in which women have no part. Out of the 14,381,462 female population there are 6,381,658 women employed in some kind of remunerative professional work, which makes an average of nearly half the women of France. There are 7,728,854 married women in France, and of these 2,685,796 are wage-earners as well as wives. In no country in the world are there so many professional workers amongst married women as in France.

It is not astonishing, therefore, considering what Frenchwomen are able to achieve, and considering all that their newer education has taught them, that by degrees they have become conscious of their position and are unwilling to accept any longer the subservience that has been thrust upon them for so many generations. Feminist ideas naturally have gained much ground of recent years amongst thoughtful Frenchwomen. But the methods of the Frenchwomen are still entirely different to those of the women of the Anglo-Saxon and Northern countries. It must be remembered that the Roman Catholic Church, though it freed women

in the past, has been largely the cause of the subservience of women in more modern times, and even when the religious convictions of the Church have passed away, their far-reaching teachings have yet remained unconsciously strong among the civilizations which they have helped to form. The women of to-day have liberated themselves largely from the narrowness of certain doctrinal beliefs, but just as the whole of France is still largely controlled, morally, by those past religious teachings, unconsciously but still strongly, the Frenchwoman—like the women of other Latin races—still finds her power in her apparent weakness, and seeks always to convince man, not as an aggressive rival force, but by the methods of the weaker creature. They know that they cannot influence *directly*, and feel it to be a compensation when they can influence *indirectly*, rather than allow their interests to be entirely ignored. I do not attempt to defend these principles personally, but I am bound to admit that in France the method has its obvious advantages, and has at least the merit of proving that women can achieve something, even if legally their action be unrecognized. Liberated from the thrall of the convent and broadened by the University education they are now receiving, the mentality of modern Frenchwomen

differs entirely in character from that of their grandmothers. The result is that these later generations are more emancipated and have begun to demand their rights. But they do not clamour for them. They still go to work to convince men in the more peaceful manner, for, their souls having been trained to subservience for so many generations, their very character has been modified. They will always seek to win by insidious ways what they fear they cannot yet gain by bold attack.

Although there is a large body of French feminists who are striving—and have long been striving—for their rights by uniting into groups, forming leagues, and talking on platforms—and all are most useful in their way—there is really nothing so efficacious taking place in France to-day as the quiet, concentrated unanimous effort of all Frenchwomen, each for her own individual affranchisement! For each woman—avowedly or unavowedly—in her capacity of wife, mother, sister, or friend, is working silently towards one end. Each is convincing her own man as well as the other men around her, and it is positively astounding to note how in a very few years—since Frenchwomen have begun to be more highly educated—feminist ideas have gained ground among all the men of France.

It must not be forgotten that in the girls' Lycées of Paris, for instance, a course of legal lectures is given by a woman barrister, and this novel departure has been of great service to them, and has opened their eyes to their true position in the Napoleonic Code of Law. The men of the country have also been forced to admit that the claims of women are just and equitable. It would seem indeed, that French educationists are far more logical than their English colleagues. They are quite ready to recognize that if you teach a woman to read, she will soon find out what is lacking in her own case, and will clamour for her rights as soon as she begins to spell, though it would seem that English educationists, most illogically, say to woman: 'You may read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. But the paternal authorities of your land will not allow you to put your knowledge to any practical use!'

Frenchwomen have therefore chosen the right means of gaining their ends with regard to their rights. They quite understand that in their own country they must be 'feminine' in order to be 'feminist.' They have shown that they have the true instinct of the governing power by using the material they have in hand in the most practical manner possible and in the

way best suited to the quality of that material. If questioned as to her opinions concerning the methods of the English 'suffragettes,' the Frenchwoman would probably answer that if the Englishwoman has chosen such methods, then they are the right ones for her own country. For the Frenchwoman believes in the practical sense of women all over the world. At heart—as I have already pointed out—she considers men as big babies and treats and manages them as such. She therefore pets and humours them, to gain her own ends, but she believes that if the English suffragette by 'making a row' is going to get the vote in England, then in her opinion the Englishwoman's system is the right one for British women.

The Frenchwoman, who has been able to convince the Frenchman that the woman's point of view is necessary in the management of the home and in the management of his own career, will soon convince him that he cannot dispense with his wife's opinion in the management of the State. And as the Frenchman recognizes the value of the feminine judgment in his own affairs, he is already three parts gained to the belief in her competence in the affairs of his country.

Although Napoleon's Code refuses to give

women certain legal rights, it enforces upon them nearly all the responsibilities of the male subjects of the nation. But by degrees the Code is being amended, and upon many points the women of France who claim redress of grievances have succeeded in gaining their desires. The right of a married woman to her own earnings, the perfect equality of man and woman in the law of divorce, and many other changes besides, have been brought about of late years in the French Code through the direct or occult influence of women.

But notwithstanding these innovations, if one judges from a general point of view, one is forced to say that the great mass of Frenchwomen are still more interested in their own homes and family than in outside and political affairs. It is always difficult to generalize; but one must always bear in mind when studying these questions that it is the lower middle class of a nation that holds the largest number of representative types, and it is from representative types that one must judge, and not from exceptional cases. If comparisons were to be established between the women of France and of England, for instance, I think I might safely assert that the women of the lower middle class in England would be more interested in the general news

SCANDAL-MONGERING.
From the painting by Jules Cayron.

contained in a newspaper, than Frenchwomen of the same class, whose entire thought and brain would be devoted to the home. I am not trying to determine which is the higher type of individual, and do not wish to take part for one more than for the other. It is probable, however, that it is the Frenchwoman who is the more useful of the two, at least to the happiness of those around her, even though her outlook be more limited and the range of her interests narrower. She is devoted to her husband and children, and is the centre and pivot of the whole family group, being essentially a wife and mother before being a citizen. Yet, notwithstanding her very great qualities—which nobody appreciates more than I do—I do not hesitate to declare that in choosing a woman friend I should choose an Englishwoman rather than a Frenchwoman. For the Frenchwoman, possessing less of the spirit of the citizen than her Anglo-Saxon sister, and because her whole soul is wrapped up in her own family, is less inclined to give herself entirely to her friend. Though one can sometimes rely upon the spontaneous kindness of the Frenchwoman, one would be ill-advised in confiding to her anything one would not wish repeated, at least to her husband—if to no one else—though it is only fair to say that her judgment would be

broad, and she would be inclined to be more indulgent in passing sentence upon the lapses of others than the Englishwoman. Yet her own critical sense makes her, if not an unreliable, at least an exacting friend. She will comment upon her friend's faults and failings to outsiders with such keen insight that, without wishing to be uncharitable and unkind, she may do real harm to those who have trusted in her.

But the Anglo-Saxon woman, who is perhaps less centred in her home and who has broader outside interests, has developed more virile qualities, and therefore possesses a sense of more reliable friendship and is more dependable. She will be inclined to keep the confidence of a friend to herself, and being an '*honnête homme*,' will speak of them to nobody, not even to her husband.

VII

THE STORY OF CAMILLE

In a book of this kind one is forced to generalize, and having formed one's own judgment by means of the accumulated examples one has collected, it is well now and again to illustrate one's statements by quoting particular cases and examples that have helped this generalization. Here is the story of a particular Frenchwoman whom I have known for the last fifteen years, and who is in fact my very dearest friend. She is an entirely modest creature, unknown and quite unfashionable, and would probably be appalled at the mere idea of being quoted as an example. But she is very typical of her race.

Her father was a professor in a provincial Lycée. He had no private means, and had married a dowerless girl for her beauty. His total income consisted in the salary of 4,000 or 5,000 francs he earned each year at the Lycée, supplemented by private lessons. He had three

children—two girls and a boy rather younger. Camille, the eldest, my friend, learned French, English—which she speaks admirably—and Latin, besides many other things, and specializing in literature, passed her *Baccalauréat* at the age of eighteen. Then she entered the Normal College at Sèvres, and afterwards won her *agrégation* by competition at the Sorbonne. After this she was given a professorship at a girls' Lycée in the provinces, and now set to work to earn her own living in grim earnest.

She worked so well, so diligently, so persistently, that even though she had no powerful friends at court—that is to say, in Ministerial circles—to forward her career, she was appointed *au choix* to a Lycée in Paris—that Mecca of all *universitaires*. About this time her brother, who was a few years younger than herself, came up to Paris to study medicine. Now board and residence in the Latin Quarter, as well as the *cours* at the Faculté de Médecine, were expensive—at least too expensive for the purse of a poor University professor who had already brought up, nourished, and educated three strapping children, and whose own health was beginning to fail. So Camille undertook to pay all her brother's expenses during his student days.

She was then earning 3,000 francs a year at the Lycée, and was teaching there from eight in the morning till 4 p.m. She took a tiny flat of two rooms and a kitchen near the Lycée for herself. To economize servants' wages she did her own housework and cooking, and on Thursdays—which is the whole-day school holiday all over France—and on Sundays made her own clothes, which she cut out, fitted, and trimmed most tastefully. And, mind you, all this time not only was she entirely self-supporting, but she also supported her brother and paid all his college expenses, too, out of her tiny income. As soon as he had passed his examinations, her brother started life as a doctor. Then they set up house together, and he tried to spoil her as much as he could to make up for all her goodness to him. He became very successful, has married very well, and has a brilliant career before him.

After his marriage Camille, of course, lived alone once more. She had always continued her work at the Lycée, never missing a single *cours* and never being late. Always to be depended upon in her work, she was one of the pillars of the establishment, bringing home hundreds of exercises to correct every evening, and after she had finished them sitting down to her own sewing or mending. Besides all her other accom-

plishments she can also wash and iron. She is a born mother; in fact, she mothers everyone instinctively—men, women, children, and animals alike; and everything she does—even this—is the better done because of her intellectuality, and not in spite of it. That she has never married is the eternal shame of all the men that have known her, for all her life she has wanted to marry and to have a home—and above all children—of her own. It is not that men have failed to appreciate her qualities, but it is because she has never had a *dot* that they have passed her by and married le worthy wives. Comments here are useless.

Notwithstanding her simpler duties, she also kept up her reading, followed all the questions of the day, taking a special interest in all women's questions. Apropos of this, a *député* who was about to defend Female Suffrage at the tribune of the Chambre des Députés, met Camille at a dinner-party a few days before the sitting. They spoke of the question together, and Camille's arguments were so brilliantly logic, so justly and well expressed, that he said to her when the party broke up: 'I should be so grateful if you would write me a few notes on all you have been telling me this

evening!' 'Certainly,' said Camille, 'I will write it out to-morrow, which happens to be Thursday, therefore my free day.'

She did so; and the following morning the *député* received a heavy budget concerning the entire question. The case was stated and explained as it now stands actually in the columns of the *Journal Officiel*, wherein all Parliamentary Debates are reported. Certain reforms were suggested and certain articles of the Code quoted and discussed. My friend had merely intended these notes as references for the young orator; but what was her amazement, a few days later, to see printed in all the morning papers, in its completeness, her own copy, which had been delivered in the form of a speech at the tribune of the Chambre des Députés the day before by her friend the *député!* As a matter of fact, he had possessed no real opinions upon the matter himself, and had only chosen it as the subject of his speech in order to strike an arresting note among his colleagues. But Camille's paper had been so admirably written and had presented the case so forcibly, so convincingly and in so brilliant a literary style, that the wily politician had merely read out her paper at the tribune as if it were his own speech—naturally omitting to quote her name—while she, in ignorance of the honour

he was doing her prose, was busy plodding away at the Lycée!

The small flat Camille now occupies has four rooms, charmingly and artistically furnished with *bibelots*, pictures, books, &c. Here she is now able to enjoy the luxury of the services of a *femme de ménage*, who comes in every day for a few hours to do the rougher work, for her salary at the Lycée has somewhat increased and she now has fewer expenses. But she still cooks her own meals, washes up, and does the lighter work of her household.

She delights in collecting old china, being the happiest woman in the world when she picks up an old piece for a few sous in the country. She has made great strides in her profession, too, and some three or four years ago, when the Government decided to form an Extra-Parliamentary Committee at the Ministry of Public Instruction for the study of University questions—which Committee was composed of former Ministers of Public Instruction and those *députés* who had been *Rapporteurs de Budget de l'Instruction Publique* or who had specialized on educational questions —Camille was one of the two women elected to this Council. And this again by the sheer merit of her work alone. Last year she was appointed Examiner in Literature for the women's

agrégation at the Sorbonne — the first time a woman has ever held such a post in France.

With all this she is still pre-eminently a thoroughly feminine creature, despite all her knowledge and all her intellectual culture. I truly believe that when she can buy a cheap remnant of silk at the Galeries Lafayette and employ one of her rare leisure hours to make it into an evening cloak for herself, she is far prouder and far more elated than when she achieves something great in her profession. For she takes a general delight in making herself look as pretty and as attractive as possible. She has never been beautiful in the strict sense of the word, but she has tender brown eyes that look like wet velvet, and a winning smile that shows her perfect white teeth. She is now getting to be an old maid, but her charm increases day by day. She will be far better looking at forty than she ever was at twenty, because of all the sweetness that living her life as she does—cheerfully and hopefully—has put into her dear face.

She is not a 'coquette' but she is every inch a 'woman,' and a Frenchwoman and a Parisienne too in her tastes. She loves pretty things, pretty gowns, lovely colours, fine textures, and just as she lives 'in beauty'—as Ibsen would

put it—she likes to be surrounded by all things which, however simple, are beautiful in themselves. The gown that she wears at the Lycée is of black cloth and quite plain, but it is well cut and smart in style and fit. Her hat is always jauntily set on her head—her hair, which is nearly two yards long, if you please! is wound in great strands round her head. Her pretty feet are always well shod. She is a woman good to look upon, whom all children love at once—and not only the little children, but also those grown-up children, men and women, who realize her deep mother-heart and the comfort of her. Although she has lived so blameless a white life herself, my friend Camille is not only one of the largest-hearted but also one of the broadest-minded of women. She turns aside from no human frailty with a shocked sense of offended delicacy, but has the deep understanding and sympathetic love for all offenders of the truly pure in heart. She never blames or condemns; she only loves and pities.

During the sad days of two years ago, when the Seine rose almost above her banks, Camille read with sorrow the story of the sufferings of those poor working people who were flooded out of their homes in the suburbs. On the way to the Lycée the next morning she sent a telegram to

the Mayor of Ivry—the poorest and most afflicted district near Paris—telling him that he could send her a few homeless victims of the flood and she would put them up until they could return to their homes. When she returned from the Lycée that same afternoon, she found five forlorn creatures sitting in a row on her doorstep awaiting her return. They consisted of a working man and his wife and their three children, aged seven, five, and two years. The Mayor of Ivry had taken her at her word. They had been waiting for her an hour.

She showed them into the flat. There was a large *salamandre* stove burning in the study. She set them down before it to get warm, and then went to work to turn her sitting-room into a dormitory. She pulled out beds, mattresses and divans and made them comfortable. Meanwhile she sent down the mother of the brood to buy meat, vegetables, and various other provisions, and with the aid of the eldest child, whom she pressed into service, prepared the vegetables and made them a great cauldron of hot soup. She tried to get the mother of the children to help her in this, but the woman declared that she never had made soup in her life. Before her marriage she had not been in service, having been employed all day long in a factory, and

had learned nothing of housework or cookery. Camille showed her how to make the soup, and with the help of the older girl laid the cloth for a meal in the dining-room. Never before had there been as many as six people round Camille's small table! Camille sat at the top and served the soup. Suddenly the little boy, aged five, began to set up a howl and refused to eat his soup.

'What's the matter? Don't you like it?' asked Camille.

'No. . . . I want some *fromage*. Mother never makes us soup at night. . . . Nasty stuff! She gives us bread and cheese. *Je veux du fromage.*' And he began to yell afresh, drowning all their voices.

After a few moments Camille turned to the mother in dismay:

'Do you let him behave like this often?' she inquired. 'Is this the way you educate your son?'

The mother cast her eyes down meekly.

'Oh! he is a very naughty boy,' she replied. 'I can't manage him at all. When he begins to yell like that I simply leave him alone.'

'Do you?' said Camille. 'Then you are wrong. What he wants is a good spanking.'

At this remark the little wretch began to yell

still louder. Then Camille threw down her spoon, rose, and rushed towards him.

'A good spanking is what you want, my boy, and it is what you are going to get! And it appears that I must teach your mother how to do it. Come along!'

And before he could utter another sound—so great was his astonishment—she had picked him up by the seat of his trousers and tucked him under her arm like a trussed fowl! When the punishment had been administered, little Jean was sent back to his place, a sadder and wiser boy, and lapped up his soup like a little lamb. . . .

(Camille has no greater admirer to-day than the little boy to whose mother she gave a lesson in spanking.)

Before putting the children to bed that night, Camille inspected them closely and found that a good scrubbing from top to toe would do them no harm. So she put on a large pan of water to boil, and then, tucking up her sleeves and tying on a large apron, she proceeded to hold the youngsters one by one under the kitchen tap, vigorously scrubbing them with warm water and soap, and handing each child in turn to the mother to dry and set down in a warm 'nighty' before the dormitory fire after the operation. Each infant, in succession, protested in a series of

artistic howls. But Camille was obdurate and resolved to do her duty to the bitter end; despite cries and remonstrances, she passed on each washed and weeping child to its silent, subdued parent, picking up the next to hold up under the tap in turn. This was a valuable lesson to the mother, who learnt how to spank and to wash in one day—not to mention the making of soup!

Needless to say that the whole family adore 'Mam'zelle Camille.' They have long ago settled back in their own home, but on Sunday mornings, when the children have behaved themselves well all the week, as a reward they are washed and dressed in their best and brought to see their friend.

During the ten days she had these poor people with her, Camille taught the mother a great many useful things in the matter of housekeeping and education. She gave the eldest girl her first lesson in sewing, and instructed the boy in the art of making himself useful instead of objectionable, and finally she taught the alphabet to the baby. And during the whole time she went on with her own work at the Lycée every day, bringing home fifty or sixty exercises to correct every evening, giving them the best of all examples by her own diligence.

Though Camille is a dear creature whom I love dearly, I am bound to admit that there are many such women as herself in this land, who like her are full of courage, devotion, intelligence, and who above all possess that supreme and rarest of qualities—sterling common sense.

Now I ask you—do you honestly believe that a country that produces such women can be a degenerate country?

Surely you don't; and with me will cry: '*Vive la Française!*'

VIII

THE 'MIDINETTE'

[The nickname '*midinette*' comes from the word *midi*, or midday. As all working girls are freed from their *ateliers* or workrooms from 12 to 1 o'clock each day, they are called *midinettes*.]

THE partial strike last year amongst this class of workers in Paris brought the question of ways and means of living for the working girls, once more before the Parisian public. Reasonably speaking, this contingent of working women ought to interest the population of almost every civilized country, for is not Paris the dress-shop of the world, and may not dressmaking and 'modes' be considered the most important woman industry of the French capital? Nine-tenths of the women who work in Paris, and even more, are engaged in some branch touching upon fashions and women's clothing, whether it be as dressmaker, milliner, *lingère* or *fleuriste*.

THE APPRENTICE.
From the painting by Jules Adler

The 'Midinette'

The particular strike which occupied the attention of the public some time ago was not universal: it was restricted to a certain set of workers and it did not affect all concerned in the dressmaking trade. Yet, whatever may be the ultimate results of such agitations, one hopes it may do some good in benefiting the large class of underpaid, overworked women whose taste and whose nimble fingers help to maintain France's reputation for pre-eminence in dress throughout the world.

The work-girls, or *midinettes*, of Paris (by these I mean those *employées* who labour for wages under a *patronne*) are of three classes: those who belong to the large *ateliers* of the well-known establishments of Paris, and who, provided they have taste and clever execution, can achieve a fair position—though this is obtained only by the exceptional. Another class of workers are employed by smaller houses and private dressmakers, known as *les petites couturières*. There is yet a third class, perhaps even larger than the two others—the home-workers. These, while performing their own home duties and attending to husband and children, also take in work for the large shops (*Magasins de Nouveautés*) or for the *entrepreneuses*, as the women are called who undertake large general orders for these

Magasins de Nouveautés. These deal out the work by dozens of articles at a time to the various homeworkers (*ouvrières à domicile*).

Concerning the women of the first class—as one might say, the picked workers—it is difficult to establish what their earnings per day can be. Of course, there is a scale even amongst the *ouvrières.* Young and inexperienced workers may earn as little as 1.50 francs per day, while experienced fitters, &c., can reach a figure of 6 or 7 francs, and even more during the best seasons. The *premières*, or chief *employées* of the whole *atelier*, who give the work out to the others, are paid by the month, and in the great houses of the Rue de la Paix can reach a salary of 300 francs (£12) a month; but these prices are of course exceptional. A *patronne* of the Rue de la Paix, when questioned, says that a third of the workers get 5 francs a day, a third get more, and one third less. But if one takes into account the dead seasons, including Sundays and holidays, the annual earnings of an *ouvrière* employed in the best establishments of Paris (I am not, of course, including the *premières*) vary between 900 francs (£36) and 1,350 francs (£54).

Now the second class of *ouvrières* to whom I have alluded are employed by what may be called the *petites couturières*, or private dress-

makers. These establishments are not in the centre of the town, and though their rent is lower and their *clientèle* infinitely less wealthy, the *ouvrières* here may earn from 1 franc to 3 francs a day. Those working girls known as *les petites mains*, who do the least important part of work on a costume, such as the bottoms of skirts, pockets, &c., begin at 1 franc: the more experienced workers earn 3 francs. The advantages which this class of workers have over the first are that the work, not being so much affected by times and seasons, is more regular; there are therefore fewer dead seasons. Again, there is no walking back and forwards long distances to the place of work or paying for omnibuses; rent and living, too, are both cheaper than in the interior of the city. All these are considerations of importance in the restricted budget of the *ouvrière*.

These remarks apply in a still stronger degree to the third class of workers, who take in sewing at home and whose wages vary between 75 centimes and 2 francs per day, as they work for a still less fashionable *clientèle*, not at all given to going out of town. These workers are kept in constant employment all the year round. The worker of this third class need not necessarily be so experienced either; she need only know

how to sew. The *entrepreneuses* who take the work from the *grand magasins* and distribute it to their home-workers, give it to them ready cut out, though they have to provide their own needles and thread.

Concerning the expenditure of the working woman of Paris, Monsieur d'Haussonville, of the Académie Française, who has studied the question has published a series of budgets which seem to cover the ground of at least two of the three classes to which I have alluded. Let us suppose that the earnings of an *ouvrière* may, according to her capacity, vary between 850 francs (£34) and 1,200 francs (£48).

Her income may be thus expended:

Lodging	from 100 (£4)	to 150 frs. (£6)
Food	„ 550 (£22)	„ 750 frs. (£30)
Clothes	„ 100 (£4)	„ 150 frs. (£6)
Miscellaneous: heat, light, washing, recreation ...	„ 100 (£4)	„ 150 frs. (£6)
	Frs. 850 (£34)	1,200 frs. (£48)

The kind of lodging one can get in Paris for from 100 to 150 francs a year would be a very tiny room just under the sloping roof on the sixth floor of an old house, measuring about seven to nine feet, with a small *tabatière* window. There would of course be no fireplace, as the

very lowest price for a *pièce à feu*—and that not even in a central position—would be 200 or 220 francs a year. The *ouvrière* therefore does her Sunday cooking on a tiny charcoal stove, the initial cost of which is about 1s. 3d. A large packet of *braise*, or broken charcoal, can be bought in Paris for 20 c. Before leaving for work in the morning she can warm up some milk, or failing that, stop at the nearest *crêmerie* as she goes to the *atelier*, where she can buy a halfpenny cup of hot milk and a halfpenny roll of bread. At 12 o'clock the *ouvrière* who can afford it will take her midday meal at one of the tiny *marchands de vin*, or restaurants for working people, where she can get a portion of boiled meat with vegetables for 5d. or a half portion for 3d. With bread and cheese, when she is very rich, she can get a meal for about 2d. Failing this she buys half a pound of bread at the nearest baker's and some cheese or *charcuterie* at the handiest cookshop. She is obliged to eat her meal in the street or under a *porte-cochère*, as she is not allowed to bring food into the *atelier*. There are also many *crêmeries* in Paris where working-girls can get a meal consisting of hot coffee, milk or chocolate, with eggs and bread, for about 6d. The evening meal is provided for much in the same way as that

of midday, only it generally includes some soup instead of *charcuterie*.

In the list given above clothes account for £4 to £6. The *ouvrière* makes her own dresses on off-days, and buys her materials in the large shops where she can purchase on the hire system, paying so much a week. All odds and ends at the *atelier* belong by right to the *ouvrière*, so she often becomes the possessor of pieces of velvet, silk, or lace, which she uses as trimmings.

Monsieur d'Haussonville sets forth several other tables of figures directly from the *ouvrières* themselves. I append the list of expenses of a *lingère* who sews under-linen at the rate of 2 francs a day, and who earns 600 francs (£24) a year.

	Fr.
Rent	160
2 dresses at 10 fr.	20
1 jacket	12
4 pairs shoes at 5 fr.	20
2 hats at 3 fr.	6
3 chemises at 2 fr.	6
3 pairs stockings at 1 fr.	3
2 *camisoles* (sleeping jackets) at 2 fr.	4
4 handkerchiefs at 50 cent.	2
1 sheet	3
4 towels at 75 cent.	3
Lighting...	10
Firing	12

	Fr.
Tip for *concierge*	5
2 black aprons at 1.50 fr.	3
1 petticoat	2
Total	271

(= £10 16s. 10d.)

This leaves a margin of 9d. per day for food, which is thus apportioned :—

	Fr. c.
1 lb. bread	0 20
Milk	0 10
Mutton chop or equivalent	0 25
Wine	0 10
Coal	0 05
Vegetables	0 10
Butter	0 10
Total	0 90

This makes 328 francs 50 centimes a year for food alone, thus keeping the budget within the 600 francs. There are even smaller earnings and smaller budgets, and it seems almost incredible that in a large city one can yet manage to live on £16 a year, though, according to Monsieur d'Haussonville, this miracle has been accomplished.

There is no possibility of making a living amongst the *ouvrières* of the third class to which I have alluded. These do not work all day long,

but only during their spare hours, and some days may earn as much as 2 francs. They cannot be termed regular workers, as their whole time is not given to sewing, and are generally married women who have a husband to provide for them.

The usual work hours in Paris *ateliers* are from 8.30 a.m. to 12, and from 1.30 p.m. to 7 or 8 p.m., according to season. Beyond ten hours, extra work is paid for at a special overtime rate.

A most interesting study of the *ouvrière* or *midinette* by André Vernières, called *Camille Frison*, gives a most detailed and sympathetic insight into the life of the *midinette*. This book was indeed well worthy of being distinguished by the Académie Française. The story is very simple, and the book can hardly be called a novel. But it describes the life, the work, the perseverance and courage as well as the temptations of Camille Frison as observed by a neighbour of hers, a young man employed in a Ministry, who takes a great interest in her career. It is too long to relate the story of Camille Frison here, but it is interesting to quote certain passages of the book.

In the first chapter, which is called 'On the Way to the Work-room,' the young philanthropist who is interested in Camille Frison

THE WORKROOM OF DRECOLL'S.
From the painting by Brindeau de Jarny.

questions one of the inspectors of a large *atelier* where the young girl is employed: 'Camille Frison,' he says, 'is one of our best "first hand" workers. There are 112,000 such working girls in Paris—at least, that is the number which the census of 1901 gave, but it is probable that the number has increased since, for in the book that M. Gaston Worth, the famous *couturier*, published in 1895, only 65,000 were counted—though it is true to say that he did not count those *ateliers* which employed less than ten workers. In Paris, at present, there are 6 houses which employ from 400 to 600 workgirls; 50 which employ 100; 1,530 which employ 15 workers, and 296 which employ 10. We are one of those six large houses; during the season we employ 550 workgirls. It is said that one or two of our rival houses employ as many as 900 workers during their busy season.'

'What are the salaries which you give?'

'The apprentices earn from 75 centimes to 1.50; the *petites mains* from 1.75 to 3 francs; the *secondes mains* from 3 to 4.50; the *premières mains* from 4.75 to 5.50; the trimmers earn 4.50 to 6 francs; and the machine-workers from 4 to 5 francs. Each girl remains in her group for about two years before she is considered competent enough to pass into a higher

class of workers, so that a young girl who begins at thirteen as an apprentice may, at the age of nineteen, enjoy a fine salary as a first hand.'

'Yes, but it is doubtless the cleverest and choicest workers who come to your *atelier*—one of the most important in the city. In those smaller houses which do not employ more than ten workers, are the salaries as satisfactory?'

'There is no very great difference. A "first hand" earns 4 francs and a "small hand" 2 francs. The proof that they are satisfied lies in the fact that they make no complaint.'

'May one conclude, therefore, that the working girl of Paris is very industrious?'

'Of course she has her faults, but they are inevitable. We are bound to take her as she is. The working girl of Paris is unrivalled in the world. With a mere *chiffon*, a mere rag or two, she can often make a work of elegance, perhaps even create a *chef-d'œuvre*. When at work she is capricious, talkative, easily *distraite*. To begin with, she is badly fed. Her health is delicate and she is often inclined to be consumptive. She is pale and anæmic, and the sedentary life of the *atelier* is bad for her. When she arrives in the morning she is already tired, for she goes to bed late, often working for herself in her own room till late at night,

or, perhaps, going out to amuse herself. And nevertheless, because of the very exquisite work which comes from her hands, she must be very feminine and very much of a "Parisienne."

'What is important for us is that she should not work quickly; we do not demand second-rate produce, but artistic work—and the artist, as you know, does nothing well if he is hurried. What we want is the beauty of workmanship rather than rapidity of execution. It sometimes happens, however, that a *première* in an *atelier* receives an order to deliver a certain dress on a certain day at a certain hour. If it is an order from America, you will understand that the boat cannot wait for us!'

An extremely interesting chapter of the book is a description called *Quand Midi Sonne* (When Midday Strikes), which describes the way in which the working girl feeds herself. There are cheap restaurants in Paris specially designed for this *clientèle* of *midinettes*, but the young and charming *midinette* does not care to frequent those restaurants to which women are alone admitted. She prefers those establishments where she can meet members of the opposite sex and perhaps enjoy a mild flirtation as a relaxation from her labours. The scene described by the writer in the cheap restaurant where he goes to

watch the *midinettes* at their meal is admirably and brightly described, and he explains how the *midinette*, the victim of her own coquetry, will economize in food in order to buy herself the materials for some piece of finery, fashioned by her own fingers on the model of the more expensive finery she has been elaborating in her *atelier*.

A great many of these *midinettes* provide cold luncheons of *charcuterie*, sausages, and even such *crudités* as pickled gherkins, which they consume with bread, eating on their laps, seated on the seats of the public squares or gardens. In the brighter weather, about midday, the seats in the Tuileries gardens are entirely invaded by merry chattering groups of *midinettes*, consuming their bread and *charcuterie* together in happy harmony. The cheaper *pâtisseries* are also invaded at this time of day by the same *clientèle*, who prefer such *gourmandises* to plain healthy food.

An excellent chapter is the one devoted to the professional training of the *ouvrière*, which explains how from a youthful apprentice the workgirl blossoms forth into an important *première* with a high salary. A large portion of the book deals with the particular story of Camille Frison, who, despite all her good qualities of cheerfulness and industry, is betray-

by her lover and is left with a child to bring up alone. After her child is born she determines to do her duty as a mother and to bring it up herself, and she enters upon that hell of the working woman known to the home-worker, who labours from morn to night for the smallest and most inadequate of salaries. An excellent budget for a home-worker is given, in which the rent is assessed at 120 francs, the midday meal at 60 centimes, the evening meal at 40 centimes, while the early breakfast—which cannot be indulged in every day—is quoted at 5 centimes or one halfpenny a day. Lighting is 6 francs a year, and firing 16.50 francs. Washing is 60 centimes a week, though the larger things are washed at home. Dresses and cloaks for both mother and child, made by the woman herself, cost 70 francs a year. Footwear for both, 36 francs, and linen and stockings 18 francs. With 50 francs for annual travelling expenses and various other small details, the entire budget for mother and child attains the sum of 795.65 francs. To this must be added certain articles for work which are supplied by the *ouvrière* herself, such as needles and thread, machine oil, hooks and eyes, &c., which makes a complete total of 832 francs 15 centimes.

On the other hand, the annual income is thus divided :—

150 working days at 2.50	375.00
150 days at 2 francs	300.00
5 francs a month from the Mairie 'Charity Bureau'	60.00
Total	735.00

Thus there is a deficit of 97.15 francs.

How will the working girl of Paris manage to balance her accounts? This is the question which is discussed most ably, most interestingly, in Monsieur André Vernières's book, to which I refer my readers who desire to be further enlightened.

IX

THE 'JEUNE FILLE'

THE new education now given to French girls will evidently gradually help to evolve an entirely new type of *jeune fille*, and the older type of the *ingénue*—so dear to the heart of French dramatists of the sixties and seventies and immortalized on the stage by Suzanne Reichenberg, of the Comédie Française—will soon be a thing of the past. The convent-school education which trained girls only to one end—which was to conform to a most conventional and artificial ideal in order that they might attract the equally conventional marrying man—is gradually entirely disappearing, and a newer, more modern type has arisen of the highly educated *jeune fille*, who has learned Latin and mathematics, has attended the *cours* of the Sorbonne, and even during her holidays has learned to become a champion at lawn tennis or golf. In Paris, in more advanced families, the newer type is now almost prevailing,

but in the provinces the older type still remains, although there are signs, even in the remotest and most conventional towns, that the former ideals are disappearing too.

Before the French Republican Government decided to elaborate new programmes of instruction for the feminine youth of the country as well as for the masculine youth, and Lycees for women were opened in all the larger towns of France, French girls received but little practical *instruction*, although their *education* was a most complicated and conventional process. After a few years at a convent school had been spent, the mother became the principal educator. The programmes of conventual learning were most elementary, the principal subjects taught being religious subjects, such as the Lives of the Saints, *l'Histoire Sainte*, and the Catechism. Besides these there were embroidery and sewing, French grammar, and letter-writing, which has ever been considered as a most necessary accomplishment for Frenchwomen, and is indeed an art in which they have always excelled. These, with a little pianoforte-playing, were considered sufficient accomplishments for any *jeune fille* of the upper *bourgeoisie* twenty-five or thirty years ago. The training was in a sense well adapted to the customs and habits of the time. It was—if one

may be allowed the expression—a sedentary education, which fitted the requirements of the calmer, more serene life of those days. The *jeune fille* remained at home and was scarcely ever allowed out of the sight of her mother, who accompanied her everywhere. Whether she lived in Paris or in the provinces, she never left her own centre—that is to say, the family circle. In those days travelling was not the fashion, and families very rarely moved from one abode to another. There were fewer communications with the outside, fewer railways, and no cycles or motors. French families remained altogether more at home, and a young French girl was protected against the unknown outside. She was like a house plant, carefully shielded against draughts and open windows. And the *jeune fille* of that dispensation wished for nothing else, and knew of no other kind of existence after she had left her convent school. She was quite content to wait and prepare for the husband who, with marriage, would bring her moral emancipation and a personal establishment of her own. The months or years that separated the convent days from the days of betrothal were thus spent in the shelter of the paternal roof, in constant and unbroken companionship with her mother, and of necessity appeared to the *jeune fille* as a somewhat empty period—pro-

bably even as a very dull time—and it is not to be wondered at that she accepted the first *prétendant* offered to her by her careful parents. This period of waiting was to her like an *entr'acte* in the great play of life, during which she avidly awaited the rise of the curtain, wondering what might be concealed behind, and what the Prince Charming would be like who would come forward to lead her to the front of the stage, to sing with her the eternal duet of love and felicity. The *jeune fille* lived in the hope of this alone, for she had been taught from her earliest years that a girl's life was but an era of preparation and that marriage was the sole *raison d'être* of a woman's existence.

The mother's duty consisted in 'modelling' the heart and the character of her daughter, with the sole object of pleasing the young man who would eventually ask her in marriage. And the girl was quite willing to fit in with the very affected and stereotyped ideal which the young man who would marry her had made unto himself. For he, never having come into close contact with any young girls, had entirely false notions concerning the species, and was inclined to consider a *jeune fille* as somewhat a prudish angel. Indeed, his absurd illusions were voluntarily kept up by the mothers of his own genera-

tion, who were largely to blame for this unnatural and false vision.

As a schoolgirl—and often she remained in the schoolroom until eighteen years of age—the *jeune fille* was an absolute nonentity, and it was considered fitting that she should be so. She was never allowed to consider her own personal appearance, and was indeed so transmogrified by the enveloping black overall and the plain flat braids of her hair, drawn tight away from her temples, that even when she possessed any promise of beauty it remained unperceived, even probably by her own mother. But as soon as she left her convent the *jeune fille*, hitherto entirely unknown to all strangers, and carefully hidden away within the walls of her convent or within the bosom of her own family, suddenly made her appearance in society and was transformed into another creature. Her hair was turned up, her skirts lengthened. She was even allowed to cut the top of her gowns slightly low at the throat. She was allowed to go to parties, though of course always attended by her mother, whose side she never left for a single moment, and if she were asked to dance she was obliged to return to her mother's side instantly after each set. The righteous *jeune fille* would never encourage her partner to exchange anything but

the most *banale* sentences with her during a dance, for she must possess no opinions upon any subject. Her duty was to appear entirely characterless and colourless while she awaited the advent of the master who would transform her and make of her exactly what he wished. She might conceal potential forces, but nothing in her character must appear to be definite or decided. Her soul must appear to be an inchoate, formless mystery. One eventful day the young girl was told by her mother that one of the young men with whom she had danced, had asked her hand in marriage. Needless to say she was not informed of the manner in which this event had been brought about, discussed, arranged, and finally decided upon by her careful parents and friends. In accepting the young man she was in reality allowed no choice, for the mere fact that her parents themselves informed her of his offer, was a guarantee that they not only approved of the young man but desired her to marry him. Her destiny was therefore entirely decided for her by her vigilant relations, her own approbation being but a mere matter of form. Should she have evinced the slightest spirit of opposition, her prudent, plausible mother would soon have managed to secure her acquiescence. As a matter of fact, she was incompetent to form any

judgment concerning the character of any young man. The whole of her education had wilfully made of her a subservient creature, subordinating her spirit to the will of others, and had carefully repressed, or at least kept in abeyance, any natural powers she might possess. Yet in preparation for the important event of marriage she had been taught how to manage a house in every detail, and that knowledge she possessed thoroughly. She knew cooking, jam-making, and all the arts of the kitchen. She could embroider beautifully and sew fine linen. She could play a waltz or two on the piano, though of course she had never read a novel except those bread-and-butter English romances which seemed to be destined for translation into the French language specially for the consumption of the *jeune fille*. She knew nothing of love because she had never read anything about it, and her mother had carefully omitted the word from her vocabulary. The joke about substituting the word *tambour* for *amour* in all French songs allowed to be sung in those French families where there were *jeunes filles* is well known.

Though she was quite satisfied to accept the husband whom her parents thought suitable, after marriage the *jeune fille*, having become a *jeune femme*, began to live her own life and to

evolve her own personality, and no one had the right to interfere with her decisions—except, of course, her husband. Yet the tie formed during those years of incubation between mother and daughter was strong, and when the mother was a *maîtresse femme*, as is often the case in France, her influence was still great over her daughter, even after marriage. Hence the legendary rivalry between a Frenchman and his mother-in-law.

It is very possible—indeed most probable—that the *jeunes filles* who were trained on such formal lines, when provided with brains, had decided inwardly to lie in wait, as it were, during this chrysalid period. It would almost seem that the process was one which would stultify the intelligence, even though it may have aided moral development, insomuch as it was entirely based upon the religion of self-sacrifice and unselfishness, teaching the daughters of those generations to repress their own instincts and to live only for the happiness of others. So strongly was this theory inculcated that the women thus reared formed a generation that was resigned to self-immolation, wherein there were few *revoltées* and still fewer *féministes*. It is probable, too, that the education of those days was well adapted to the life of the times. Destined

to a very quiet home-life, it was necessary that, before all things, the *jeune fille* should be trained to practical house management. She demanded no further destiny than that of pleasing her husband, managing her home, and educating her children. Such was her mission in life. Whether this education prepared her efficiently for her duties as a wife and mother from a higher standpoint is questionable. The only part of her which was truly educated was her heart, and though the process often tended to make of her a hyper-sensitive, over-emotional creature, it made of her a human being, whose affections and feelings were the basis of her understanding. That this training did not, however, necessarily result in completely destroying her natural intelligence, as it might appear to have done, is evident when one remembers that, in spite of it, the Frenchwoman's sterling common sense has ever been an unimpaired force to be reckoned with throughout the ages.

Perhaps the reason why her education was powerless to cramp her brain entirely was because at heart the *jeune fille* herself realized that the principles of her education were but a mere momentary convention, destined soon to be discarded. If she criticized her education at all, it is probable that the brunt of her criticism

fell rather upon the young bridegroom who exacted so artificial an ideal. And this perhaps partly explains the underlying pitying contempt with which all Frenchwomen in their maturer years seem to regard men. It is the revulsion of the freed woman against the memory of the long, tedious months of bridal preparation.

But the conditions of modern life have so completely modified and altered the education of the *jeune fille* that the newer type is threatening to become exactly opposed to the earlier standards. Modern habits and customs of thought are all so greatly changing the conditions, in which marriage is possible, that many young French girls of to-day, more especially those of moderate fortunes and those who have no fortune at all, find it more and more difficult to secure a husband. Prudent parents, therefore, are bringing up their daughters to-day upon different principles. Apart from more materially practical reasons, the very basis upon which the former training of resignation was given to girls—strong religious conviction—is virtually disappearing in France. It would be impossible now to educate young girls who are no longer brought up with a firm religious faith, to the ideal of self-effacement which inspired our forbears. The young French girl is now educated, not at a convent but

at a State Lycée, where, in accordance with Republican convictions, she receives a strong intellectual instruction, but no religious or ethical training. All the forces of her personal character or temperament, which heretofore had been carefully suppressed so as to make of her an unselfish, subservient creature, are now as scrupulously trained in view of developing her more assertive conscious self. If the *jeune fille* of the past was taught that her duties in life were towards others, the modern *jeune fille* is now taught that her first duty is towards herself.

This ideal makes of her a self-reliant, self-assertive individual, and the studies she has strenuously pursued at the Lycée have equipped her thoroughly for the battle of life. She is educated now, not solely for marriage, but so that—marriage and fortune failing her—she may rely upon her own personal exertions to make a living. Under these conditions, being obliged to attend lectures or art schools alone, to make researches in libraries, &c., the *jeune fille* of to-day cannot be always accompanied by her mother. She is forced, if her family is not rich enough to afford her the services of an attendant, to go backwards and forwards from college to home alone, and thus inevitably comes into contact with the outside world; at

times she must even have to defend herself. Thus she becomes devoid of the guilelessness which distinguished the *jeune fille* of earlier generations. In former days, no French mother would have allowed her daughter to read a newspaper, but the modern French girl who crosses Paris alone can procure any newspaper or any illustrated magazine, at any newspaper stall she passes. She travels more too, and comes into contact with various types of people with whom the *jeune fille* of former days would never have been allowed to associate. It is impossible, considering the various liberties she is now allowed, to preserve her imagination as in the days of old. The same revolution has been accomplished in her tastes also. She smiles derisively at the bread-and-butter stories which so interested her mother. She is now forewarned, therefore forearmed; sees life more realistically, and does not live upon dreams alone. She will not say, like the *jeunes filles* of her mother's days, 'I will only marry a man with blue eyes or with a blond moustache.' But she has quite decided what profession her husband shall pursue, for she knows what she wants and why she wants it. When a suitor for her hand appears upon the horizon, she studies him and tries to know him well before

accepting or rejecting him. The modern French girl has even gone so far as to break off her engagement when it suits her to do so—a thing which would have been unheard-of in olden days, for it would have compromised her beyond recall.

Yet even to-day still, in certain very conventional families, a *jeune fille* who has already been engaged once is very much more difficult to 'marry off' afterwards. I know of one young girl who had been engaged twice, and twice had broken off her engagement herself at the last moment, before she was twenty-two years of age. The result was that, despite all the efforts of her friends, a husband could not be found for her, and notwithstanding her large personal fortune, she had to wait till she was long past thirty years of age before she could secure a husband for herself; and even then was obliged to put up with an overblown widower blessed with several children. . . . I also know of the case of a charming young girl who was affianced at least three times. Each time the date of the marriage was announced in the society papers, and each time the engagement was broken the very day before the ceremony. So, of course, the girl has never married at all. But here the explanation lies

in the fact that her parents—desperately anxious to 'get her off'—had always promised a large *dot* to the intending husband. Now the day before the wedding, when the contract is habitually signed, the *dot* not being forthcoming, the young man had released himself from his bonds at the last hour! But this of course is an exceptional case.

As a rule, those French girls who, a generation ago, after a broken engagement or a love disappointment, would have gone into a convent, now qualify for some career and become *jeunes filles émancipées*. The emancipated girl who, either because she cannot marry the man she cares for, or because she cannot find a suitable husband at all, is now gaining in such numbers in French society as to form almost a contingent apart. They are not so numerous as in England, it is true, but on the other hand they rarely, like the English bachelor-girls, marry later in life. The Englishwoman trains earlier for a profession, regarding marriage as a possibility upon which it is unwise to rely. But the French girl only resolutely adopts a profession when, for some reason or other, marriage has failed her or is likely to fail her. Nevertheless, the rising generation is showing itself to be far more provident. For

a large percentage of young girls at the Lycées, before reaching the age of eighteen, seek to qualify themselves for some profession. And this spirit is noticeable even among those girls who have personal fortunes, with the prudent forethought that fortunes often disappear, but careers remain.

When one takes into account the formidable number of divorces which now yearly take place in France, one realizes that the modern *jeune femme* does not hesitate to break a union which does not suit her, even after its achievement. Which all goes to prove that the virtue of resignation with which our grandmothers were so carefully inoculated, and which was the very basis of the older more sentimental education, is entirely disappearing. If the girl of the past was taught that her duty was towards others, it is evident that the modern girl now firmly believes that her duty is towards herself.

In France, as in England and in America, there already exists the extreme type of the emancipated *jeune fille*. We see one of these in Monsieur Capus' latest play, *L'Aventurier* —which has been already mentioned. Here we see a young girl with a flighty mamma whom she considers quite inefficient in the art of hus-

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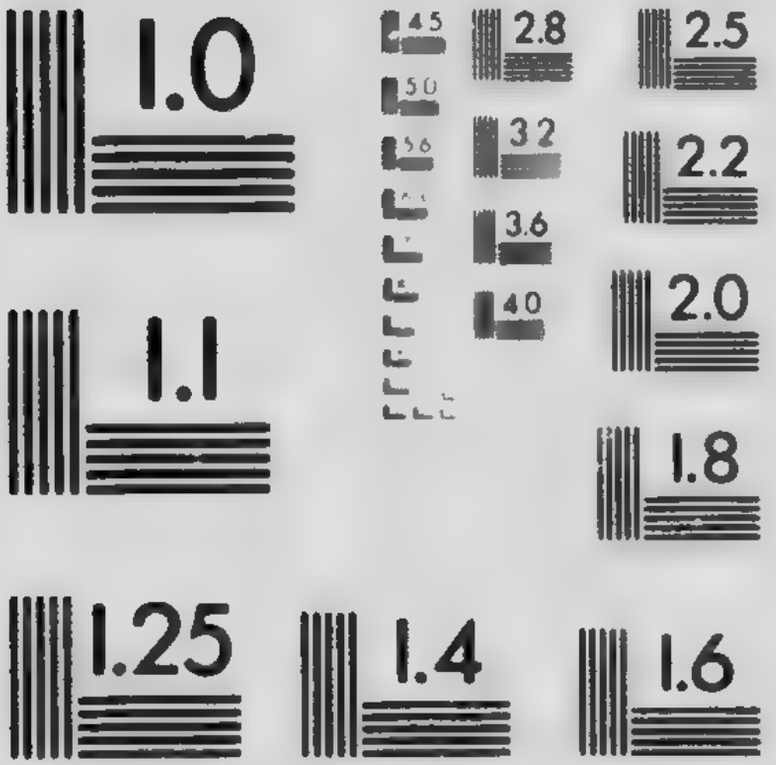

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band-hunting for her own daughter. She therefore decides not to wait for her mother to seek and choose a suitable life-partner for her, but deliberately sets about to find a husband for herself in the various *salons* to which her mother takes her. That the young man she selects should be already engaged to another girl does not interfere with her plans in the least. The victim himself is entirely unconscious of her scheming, but the girl goes to her mother and says:

'That's the young man I want. Please get him for me, for that's *your* business.'

'But——' objects the mother.

'There is no "but,"' says the daughter. 'It's your business to get me married, and in order to do this you must get me a *fiancé*. You're so lazy and inactive that I've had to look out for one myself. Here's the man of my choice; now set about to secure him for me.'

'But,' begins the mother again, almost on the verge of tears, 'he's engaged to your best friend.'

'That has nothing to do with the matter!' replies the girl. 'Now then, mother, dry your eyes and get a move on. You won't achieve anything in life if you don't hustle more than you do.'

Needless to say the mother, thus admonished, sets to work and does her best by inviting the young man to the house and being specially kind to him. The girl herself behaves perfectly odiously to him and snubs him at every turn. But this is part of her plan of action, though she is most careful, by her political influence, to secure for him a fat post which he covets.

'I can't imagine what I've done to offend your daughter,' says the young man to the mother one day, when he has been more severely treated by the young girl than usual.

'Can't you see it's because she is madly in love with you?' declares the mother to the astonished young man.

And so the trick is played, and the young man abandons his less dowered *fiancée* to marry the rich girl who has baited him so persistently.

It will be seen that this extreme type of modern emancipated young girl is very far removed from the conventional *jeune fille* of a generation or two ago. If at the present moment the older type still prevails in the provinces and in the country regions, the newer type is gradually growing in numbers in all the larger cities, and in those centres where religious education has been ousted in favour of the State instruction.

Frenchmen at first made a great opposition to the new educational programmes for women, but in view of the deeper and more sturdy qualities which the emancipated girl generally represents—when she is not of the exaggerated type just described—they have gradually realized the better side of a stronger education, although it is evident that the self-sacrificing, self-effaced, and gentle wife has always appeared a desirable ideal to the Frenchman. It is probable now that, if he were to be consulted upon the matter, the modern young man would declare himself in favour of a *jeune fille* whose education combined the qualities of both systems of the past and present. The extreme type of the emancipated female, amongst Frenchwomen, develops many characteristics greatly feared by the men of their country. If with her newer education the French girl retains the feminine characteristics which, if not inherent in her sex, have almost become so through generations of continued artificial education—by these I mean those traits of ruse and duplicity which are the essential attributes of all repressed creatures—the modern Frenchwoman might become a most redoubtable comrade for the newer generation of Frenchmen. But it is evident that

the newer type of Frenchwoman will forcibly evolve a modified type of man. The Frenchman has always himself held many feminine characteristics—not necessarily of the better kind—but the modern Frenchwoman is originating a higher standard for the masculine mind. Some years ago an English writer who loved France declared that the best men in France were the women — and this because of the sterling common sense and practical usefulness of the Frenchwoman. Now if this appeared to be true at a time when most women in France were but insufficiently educated, how much truer will it have become when all Frenchwomen have received the same strong intellectual training as the men of their country!

X

THE PARISIANS

It is erroneously believed by many foreigners that Paris is France and that France is Paris. This is again a mistake of judgment on the part of those visitors to Paris who, only knowing the capital itself, believe that it represents the whole of France as well as all French ways and customs. Paris in itself represents neither the inner family life nor the social ways and customs of the entire nation, though it does most essentially stand for the intellect of the country, and while it does not centralize all France's activity, it certainly combines most of her mental and artistic effort.

For although the more thoughtful life of the country is concentrated in Paris alone—in spite of the very great effort towards decentralization made during recent years—this does not mean that the French provinces have no distinctive life of their own. On the contrary. Provincials are

so strongly—indeed, one might say, so solely interested in their own family life and material occupations that they acquire, precisely because of their mental and social torpor, a nervous strength that enables them to serve as a reliable reserve fund for the continual demands of the great capital, and they are ever giving of their best to the strenuous life of Paris.

Paris may be aptly described as a nation in itself, at least in its modes and habits of thought. It is entirely self-centred, and is inclined to be disdainful of all that lies outside of its own atmosphere. It knows itself to be the brain of France, and calls itself *La Ville Lumière* with some pride, for it is conscious that it is the recognized nucleus of all that is most brilliantly artistic and intellectual in the nation.

Nevertheless it does not represent the entire nation, for with all the qualities of its brilliant and vivacious society, it lacks the sterner, austerer, though sometimes duller virtues of the steadier provinces. The very mind of Paris differs totally from the mind of the rest of France, and its very political opinions are always entirely opposed to those of the provinces, as is evidenced by the continual conflict waging between the politics of the Municipal Government of Paris and the State Government, represented by the Chambre des

Députés and the Senate. The Parisians themselves, forming a population apart, have but a few methods of thought in common with the provincials. They affect a certain scorn for them because in their estimation they are neither smart, elegant, nor up-to-date. They consider provincial life as hopelessly dull and tiresome, if not as entirely stagnant. It is certain that the life of the provinces, in spite of the fine moral qualities it breeds, is in itself very narrow and conventional compared with the life of the metropolis, though if Paris looks down with some contempt upon the provincials, these in turn consider themselves to be far more moral and serious-minded than Parisians, even though all clever and ambitious provincials regard Paris as the only possible Mecca of their hopes.

What demonstrates better than anything the great difference between the spirit of the Parisians and of French provincials [illegible] their respective manner of appreciating people.

The essential hall-mark of admission among Parisians is to be 'amusing,' which in this particular sense signifies to be entertaining or interesting in one's own special way, by presenting some novel point of view or by offering some new conception of thought, art, literature,

science, &c. In this spirit Parisians accept friends and acquaintances more easily than provincials, and with less searching scrutiny with regard to their character. But their standard of taste is very high; they are most difficult to please, most fastidious, and far more exacting with regard to the interest a new-comer can offer than the provincial *bourgeois*, with all his moral insistence for respectability. The provincial mind looks for and demands soberer, more puritanical virtues. The possession of these alone can satisfy him. Thus when inquiring about a new acquaintance, the provincial will question: '*Who* is he?' But the more careless Parisian, who wishes to avoid boredom above all things and at any price, asks: '*What* is he?'

There are in reality two Parises which must not be confused—the real Paris, which belongs to the Parisians alone, and the essentially meretricious Paris, which appeals only to the pleasure-seeking foreigner or provincial. This Paris of the frivolous visitor is the music-hall of the world, and the series of entertainments and—if I may be allowed the expression—'faked shows,' which it provides exclusively for the amusement of outsiders, are in no way indicative of the recreations of the real Parisians—at least after

they are twenty years of age. Indeed, they are run by Parisian caterers solely for the tastes of the tourists, and form a class of entertainment entirely apart, which, if not completely ignored by the residents of Paris, are at least practically unknown to them. Being specially organized for the use of the foreigner, and patronized almost exclusively by him, they appeal in no way to the taste of the Parisians themselves. There are innumerable pleasure resorts of this kind which thus exist in certain parts of Paris—at Montmartre more especially—which the Parisians themselves never visit. Yet side by side with these are other places of amusement exclusively patronized by Parisian residents, which offer no allurement at all to the outsider. For instance, I could quote the names of dozens of well-known Parisians (myself among the number by the by, though it does not sound modest to speak of one's self!) who, having lived for very many years in Paris and partaken of the intellectual and artistic life of the city in every way, have never yet set foot inside such an institution as the famous 'Moulin Rouge,' which most foreign trippers, and many French provincials too, seem to consider as so very typical of Parisian life. It may in a sense be typical indeed, but it only typifies the kind

of recreation Paris prepares for the amusement of foreign visitors alone.

For the Parisian himself such institutions only represent a business and a means of material gain for the caterers of his city. Yet it seems to be difficult for outsiders to understand this. Their tendency seems always to judge Paris from the artificial standpoint. They do not seem to understand that there is a certain class of morally spurious goods which Paris manufactures for the world, and of these the naughty shows of Montmartre, and such-like, are examples of what is designed for outside patrons. Just as the inhabitants of a fashionable watering-place cater for the special public that visits their locality at stated intervals, so a certain class of Parisian showmen cater for visitors to Paris. But the city thus revealed to the foreign visitor is one that is entirely different to the Paris of the Parisians.

When foreigners come to Paris they argue that they are quite unknown there and they want to have 'a good time'—and having 'a good time' with them means that they can be improper without danger, which is not the case in their own country. Now in Paris, impropriety is less hidden than in London and New York, which does not necessarily mean that its inhabitants are less moral. Hence the Paris which is the only one

known to such visitors, but which is unknown to most Parisians.

The amusements of the Parisians themselves are far more intellectual and refined. When they do go beyond the limit of *les convenances*, their merriment always has some artistic element in it. Such entertainments as those formerly organized at the 'Chat Noir,' for instance, however daring they were, brought before the public an entirely new school of artists—Maurice Donnay and many others—who have since become famous, and justly so. The real Parisians are hard-working, steady, and thrifty, and perform all the harder work of the city, which often consists in catering for the amusement or the luxury of the foreigner. Paris dresses the world, cooks for the world, largely amuses the world, and often thinks for the world; and those who work in this general interest, labour far harder and during far longer hours than any other citizens of Europe.

Ask the English clerk and lady typist who have been employed in Paris offices, and they will tell you that all the *employés* as well as the chiefs in all the business houses of Paris are ready in the office at half-past eight in the morning, and that even when the *employés* leave at 7 p.m. the chiefs themselves are

rarely able to do so before 7.30 or 8 p.m. Go to the Public Schools, the Lycées, &c., and you will find that all the classes begin punctually at 8.30, and that professors and pupils alike are in the building at 8.20 every morning. School holidays are far shorter in France than anywhere else, which means that both teachers and pupils work longer. There are only four or five days' holiday at New Year, and one day at Christmas. Within recent years a full fortnight has been allowed at Easter time, but when I was a professor at a Lycée, eight or nine years ago, there were only three days at New Year—the 31st of December and the 1st and 2nd of January—and only a week at Easter. In the larger shops, which open every day at 8 o'clock in the morning and close every night at 7.30, without the benefit of a single evening for early closing hour, the *employés* have to attend on Sundays when there is a sale on Monday—which often happens—to prepare the departments for the special sales.

The smaller shops, which are never closed a single day in the whole year (except on the National Fête Day), rarely put up their shutters until after 8.30 at night, though they open at 8 in the morning. Throughout the whole year—and still more so in the summer-time—the large

railway companies increase their local services by a large number of special Sunday and holiday trains. There are two postal deliveries on Sunday in Paris, and even though a certain number of post-offices are closed each week to the public in each district, telegrams and *pneumatiques* are received and delivered all over Paris and the environs on Sundays as on week-days. Tramways and omnibuses, as well as the city services of the Metropolitan and Nord-Sud trains, run in the same number and at the same hours on Sundays as on weekdays. Theatres and restaurants are not only open on Sundays all over the city, but are usually filled to overflowing on that day; for it is a general custom among the *bourgeois* families of Paris to dine out *en famille* on Sunday, so as to allow the *bonne-à-tout-faire* a free afternoon and evening. These facts prove that the working population of Paris is kept very busy, enjoying but very rare leisure.

Strange to say, the Parisian is very rarely, if ever, a native of Paris, and though he is one of the most characteristic individuals in the world, he is in reality an artificial, not a natural production, and is acquired by importation. But there seems to be something so acutely personal and special in the very atmosphere of Paris that it gradually transforms all settlers,

provincial or foreign, by means of an insidious process of its own, endowing them with a new and most distinctive personality. Whatever may be his past traditions of home, family, or race, the Parisian, once created, is an individual of a distinctly separate nation. I do not think it possible for people of other countries to understand completely what essence it is that transforms an outsider into a Parisian. Probably it is the intellectual spirit of the city, *l'esprit Parisien*, which accomplishes this, and which might be explained rather as a particular attitude of appreciation and of *taste* than as a voluntary mental attitude. I use the word *taste* in its broadest and widest sense, for it is almost impossible to describe or to define the essence of *parisianisme*, which must be felt to be understood. But be they of whatever condition or class, from the highest to the lowest, all those who have come directly under its influence realize that, in spite of their original tendencies, they have been subtly and insidiously permeated when once they have become part of the magic city, and imbued, as it were, not only with a new character, but also with a new and very distinct nationality.

Yet, however strongly this may be felt by the individual, it cannot be transmitted by inheritance. It has been repeatedly proved that no Parisian

family ever lasts for more than three generations, which demonstrates the fact that each person must necessarily receive a separate inoculation.

As all Parisians of talent—that is to say all the greater men of politics, literature, art, and science—are imported from the provinces, it would appear that it is in the provinces alone that men of talent and ambition can generate the nervous strength so rapidly exhausted in Paris life, and which is so fundamentally necessary for the development of an individual brain. These come to Paris when quite young, full of their hopes and ambitions, and rush headlong into the fray determined to succeed. If they are strong enough, they emerge triumphant and settle definitely in the capital. If not, they are broken, and return later, crushed, humbled, and weary, to their old provincial home.

The Parisians of to-day are thus formed of Bretons, Normans, Gascons, Provençals, &c., who in a few years have been transformed by the compelling atmosphere and by the very genius of the city, and so have become *Parisianisés*.

Yet, even when they have becon entirely Parisians, these provincials retain many of their local souvenirs and, of course, in a great measure, the characteristics of their race. They keep in

A GARDEN PARTY OF THE ELYSÉE, THE RESIDENCE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.
(The central figure is that of the President.)
From the painting by O. D. V. Guillonnet.

touch with their own province all through their lives, generally going from the capital to spend their holidays in their old childhood's home, gathering fresh courage and new energy for the struggle in the great, cruel, fascinating city. And not only do they retain a preference for the traditions of their own family, but in Paris they have a tendency to clan with those friends of their youth who come from the same part of France as themselves. They help one another in their careers, clinging together like the members of one large family. Even when entirely transformed into Parisians they still form associations among their countrymen, so that they may meet regularly, dine together, discuss one another's interests, and talk of old times. Thus there is *La Pomme*, which is the association of all the Normans of Paris, *Les Bretons de Paris*, *Les Périgourdins* (known also as *La Truffe*, because truffles grow in Périgord), *Les Bourguignons*, &c., and many others which are associations of the various provincials of Paris. Some of these have most curious names, which appear almost inexplicable to outsiders. The club of *Les Gaudes*, for instance, takes its name from a local dish concocted of maize and beloved by all who come from the region of *La Franche-Comté*. The

Poitevins, or inhabitants of Poitou, have also a local malodorous cheese called *chabishou*, which lends its picturesque name to the association of *Poitevins* in Paris.

The social life of Paris differs widely from the social life of other European capitals. There is no recognized social leadership, represented by a group of high social standing, to lead the van of fashion, as in those cities which are led by a Court set. Since the days when the Empress Eugénie reigned at the Tuileries there has been no Court in France, hence no predominant social set to lead the fashions and hold sway over the smart set of Paris. As soon as the Republic was created the old aristocratic families withdrew from all interest in the government of the country, refusing to ally themselves with those Republicans whom they regarded as usurpers and upstarts, and with whom, therefore, they would have nothing in common. Hence during the first years, and indeed until quite lately, there was a complete division between the old aristocracy of France and the modern leaders of the State. Besides differing in political opinions, these two sets were also widely separated by differences of religious views. French Republicans have always asserted their liberal freethinking opinions, while the French aris-

tocracy has ever remained the stronghold of the Catholic Church, and the nobility not only refused to mix socially with the Republican *élite*, but also withheld their sons from seeking appointments in any of the State Administrations. With the exception of the Army, the Navy, and Diplomacy, the families of *la noblesse* would accept no position of any kind in the Republican Government. This aloofness gained them a reputation for indolence and inefficiency among the Republicans, who on their side professed to disdain them because of their uselessness. But as in France there is, above all, a cult of brains, the aristocrats relented somewhat when they were forced to admire the talents of the greater men of the Republic. By degrees more leniency has begun to grow on both sides, and the two sets of the richer and more leisured classes are day by day—though very slowly—drawing nearer together. This tendency of fusion of Republicans and aristocrats is only possible, however, for the richer Republicans of the well-established *bourgeois* families. The poorer-paid State officials do not, of course, mix with the rich aristocracy, whose principal interest is sport in all its branches.

The fuller social life of the Republic lives among what might be called the 'upper ten' of

the *bourgeoisie*, headed by the richer *bourgeois* families and by official Republican society, composed of Cabinet Ministers and their wives, high State officials, and the Ambassadors of foreign Courts. Immediately after these comes what in England would be understood as upper Bohemia, but which in France is a more 'officiel' set that is composed of all those literary people, painters, composers, scientists, and intellectuals of all kinds who have 'arrived.' The theatrical profession, however, is not included, for actors and actresses form a particular circle of their own, and are considered outsiders in every other set of Paris life. At all the large Presidential receptions upper Bohemia mixes with official circles, and upon certain occasions is formally invited to dine at the Elysée—the residence of the President of the Republic.

Immediately after upper Bohemia is lower Bohemia, composed of those artists who have not yet 'arrived,' and then comes the *petite bourgeoisie*, composed of people engaged in trade or business who have no footing in the other worlds, and are very simple people that—socially—do not count at all. Besides these entirely Parisian sets are the various foreign colonies settled in Paris—the Anglo-Saxon set being by far the most important.

High Republican society—by this I mean those officials who happen to be in power—form a *coterie* of their own; but only momentarily. While they are in office they hold the reins of social power and preside over all the State ceremonies, &c., but in the capacity of their own officiality alone. Each season—the Republican season is in February and March—there are dinners, balls, and receptions of all kinds given not only by the President of the Republic and his various Ministers, but also at all the Embassies in Paris. Wide invitations to attend these are issued to all members of the two Houses—the Chamber and the Senate—as well as to the highest functionaries of all State offices.

But once out of power, the Ministers of the Republic return to exactly the same social position they had before they formed part of the Government. It is very amusing, and certainly very instructive in the study of human vanity, to note the difference of attitude of the social mass towards those men who are Ministers, and who, after having lost their power, return once more to the level of the plain *bourgeois*. All the honours, compliments and adulation that have been showered upon them during their term of office, in view of the power they hold, fades as

mist before the rising sun as soon as they have lost or resigned their post. Most Republicans are office seekers, for the hope and dream of every Frenchman seem to be to obtain some post under Government, and certainly no citizen seems to scruple to beg for place and power. Even the most humble *employé* in the State offices cringes for help and *protection*, or *avancement*, from any Minister whom he can get to listen to him. It is therefore easy to realize the difference of attitude towards the man in power and the man out of power. I remember once some ladies were calling upon me after the fall of a recent Ministry, and among my visitors there were three or four ladies—wives of high officials of State Administrations—who had attended a reception at the Russian Embassy the previous evening. Talking of the wife of the Prime Minister, who had fallen from power three days before, but who for the last year had enjoyed the ineffable adulation and fulsome compliments which fall to the lot of those in office, one of the ladies exclaimed: 'She actually came to the reception yesterday with her husband! Of course, hardly anybody bowed to her. What a fool she was not to stay at home! She might have known what would happen!'

Such is the spirit of Republican social circles!

Yet in spite of such feelings, however, one is bound to admit that of late years Republican officiality has become a little more refined—at least in outward appearance. The first men of the Republic, although clever and talented, were often rather uncouth, and their wives still more so; but now, as a rule, even the most democratic of Republican Ministers and their wives do not consider it necessary to look like antiquated provincial cousins.

The far most interesting set of Parisian society of the present day is the literary and artistic set. As I have said before, this in France is not called Bohemia—the term in France has rather a pejorative sense—and does not include the dramatic set, with which it comes into touch only upon a basis of professional business. With scarcely any exceptions, no French actor is 'received' in French society, except professionally. Although the literary and artistic people of Paris would not call themselves Bohemian—except upon the very lowest ranks of the ladder—yet on the whole they are broader-minded than the corresponding set in other capitals, if by broad-mindedness one understands being without prejudices. The only prejudice they seem to possess is directed against bad art. But that one is strong indeed! But I

really cannot say truthfully that I have ever known them to have any other. They express great tolerance on all questions of morality—or, if not tolerance, at least a great deal of frankness concerning relations between the sexes. I have known of many regular and excellent *ménages* in this set who openly recognize and fraternize with other *ménages* of an irregular kind. I do not intend to go into this question more deeply here, and only allude to it to emphasize the fact that, although this set of Parisian society—which is a very large one—is so broad-minded, yet it will not admit the members of the stage. An immense difference is established in French society between the irregular union and the venal union—and the latter is the generality in the French theatrical world.

The Parisians—and indeed the French in general—are a generous and kindly race, but I do not think that I could call them hospitable—at least, not in the way in which English people are hospitable. In England, when a stranger arrives with a few letters of introduction, he or she may be perfectly certain of being not only kindly received, but of being widely welcomed; and the saying 'The friends of our friends are our friends' is absolutely true on English territory. But in France it is only partly true.

The very basis of French society is the family *foyer*, and this—especially among the more conventional *bourgeoisie* and the *noblesse*—is a far more restricted and sacred institution than the English 'home.' The French *foyer* is more exclusive, because it guards the *jeune fille*. One might almost affirm that it is the *jeune fille* who is largely the reason of what might be termed French inhospitality. She is not the sole reason, but she is an important one, for she must be defended at all costs against young men in general and in particular. Not only must she not flirt with them, but in provincial society at least they even must not know of her existence. Her reputation is like the bloom on the plum, and in the minds of her prudent parents, with the advent of strangers might come the advent of emancipation. The young masculine stranger might make love to her, or treat her with the familiarity and *bonne camaraderie* which is customary between young people in Anglo-Saxon countries, but is not tolerated in France. As for the young female stranger, she might be capable, by means of her conversation and by the example of her own actions, of inoculating those ideas of freedom and emancipation which the more conventional French parent considers as so great a danger.

Then, again, the inhospitality of the French comes from the fact that the French *bourgeois* is himself the most prudent, cautious, and distrustful person in the world. The head of a French family will not admit an outsider of any kind into his circle unless he knows everything about that outsider, even if the stranger be of his own race and nationality. Before he extends the hospitality of his *foyer* to anybody, the French *chef de famille* must know where that person comes from, what is his position, and the amount of his income, who his parents and family are; in fact, everything about his circumstances. It is not necessary, however, that his circumstances should be brilliant nor his family a great or mighty one—for at least, despite his other faults, the French *bourgeois* is not a snob—but his mind must be satisfied concerning the respectability of the people he receives into his home. To attain this knowledge he will question friends and acquaintances until he has found out all he wants to know. Any person who cannot account for his position, for his money, for his origin and for his family connections, and satisfy the inquiries thus made, counts at once as an 'adventurer,' and will ever be considered and treated as an outsider. No man, because of a huge

fortune, can penetrate into the circle of a conventional French home, unless he can give most satisfactory references, for the mere possession of money is not considered as a guarantee of respectability in France at all.

Inviting one's friends to 'stay' for a few days or weeks in one's own house is not a French custom. Except during the summer holidays, in the *châteaux* of the provinces and among the wealthier families, French people rarely invite their acquaintances to share the intimacy of their home. In Paris and in the larger towns, families are too narrowly housed to be able to afford a 'spare room.' 'Staying with friends' is therefore not an institution in France, as it is in England, for instance, and this acts as a great restraint upon intimate friendly relations. Friends can become more united after a few days' residence together than by means of many years' acquaintanceship at the 'at home days' or formal dinner-parties which are the usual means of intercourse among French people.

The French family is in reality far more united than the Anglo-Saxon family, and far less interested in outsiders. There is a great homogeneity of taste and tradition that binds its members closely together. That very French

fault of acquiring *protections* and performing *pistonnages*, which is in itself so bad a characteristic of the race, seems to be transformed into a sort of quality when it links together the interests of a whole family. All the members of a French *foyer* are thus bound together and fight their way in the world hand in hand. They aid one another throughout life, and are devoted to each other's interests always, even when their callings are of a totally different kind. It is this strong link between those of the same family which makes their intimacy so sacred to them.

When they do admit a stranger to their circle, they will talk of general subjects before him, but will never discuss family affairs. That is why it is so difficult—indeed almost impossible—for any stranger, even after years of residence in France, to acquire a real knowledge of inner French life. He will be afforded no opportunities for studying or judging the French at home. Although the members of a French family are in many ways almost shamefully frank between themselves, and even among their very intimate friends and relations, in discussing all sorts of domestic events, their true intimacy is a sealed book to the outsider.

Under these conditions it is very rare that

one finds an open table in a French *bourgeois* home. When the French invite their friends it is to a ceremonious meal, and then, as they express it, they put *les petits plats dans les grands*, and do their utmost to offer an exceptionally good entertainment, which is a real dinner-party. Their guests know perfectly well that they are not sharing the ordinary repast of the family, and when they return the hospitality which they have themselves received, they do so in the same measure—that is to say, they invite their former host and hostess to a formal dinner, not to the sharing of the family board. An invitation to dinner is an *affaire de politesse*. There is none of that informal 'dropping in' to lunch or even to dinner which is so delightfully customary among the Anglo-Saxon races, and which all foreigners consider the greatest charm of a visit to England or America.

This English hospitality (which the French always call '*l'hospitalité Ecossaise*') of course is largely the result of the simpler Anglo-Saxon *cuisine* and household arrangements. The families being larger, great plain joints and huge puddings are made, and an occasional friend or two added to the family group can make no difference. But though the *menu* of

a French family table is more varied, and though there are more dishes, there is far less quantity of each. The entire *menu* is changed at each meal, and French housekeepers never invest in the huge joints which are consumed cold for half the week in English families; neither do they make large provisions. In the flats of Paris and the larger towns there is very little store-room, and food is brought in fresh every day. Sometimes there are many flights of stairs to run up and down, and if one has to send out for an extra chop, or eggs, or butter, &c., it is an additional effort for the single servant who, in most middle-class households, does duty for the two or three that would be kept in England by people in similar circumstances. Such practical and economical details preclude the possibility of that informal though wide hospitality which is so delightful in Anglo-Saxon countries.

I, who have known the hospitality of the English, am always terribly abused by my French friends and relations when I declare that the French are less hospitable than the English, for although I love my country, I am bound to be fair. I could mention at least half a dozen English people of my acquaintance, who have lived in Paris for the

last five or even ten years who, although they may have many French acquaintances, have never been admitted into the closed intimacy of a French *foyer*. They may be invited over and over again on 'at home' days to a rather formal five o'clock tea, and even occasionally to a *dîner de cérémonie*, but even when their French friends are in perfect sympathy with them they yet do not invite them to the close intimacy of their family table.

On the other hand, one must not consider the French either ungenerous or mean. Any great public calamity which happens in any country will show them to be spontaneously generous and warm-hearted. In a great disaster such as the Italian earthquakes two years ago, the first to start with relief were the French, and this not only because they were the nearest neighbours of the unhappy land, but because they are an impulsively kind race. Have they not always fought, too—throughout history—for the weaker of two combatants? And even if they are not hospitable at their tables, it must be admitted that they are most generous in their Art Schools and Universities, in offering gratuitously the best of their teaching to strangers of all lands, and in welcoming them as exhibitors to their

Art Exhibitions, thus intimating that they recognize no outsiders in the world of Art.

Their lack of hospitality in the home must be ascribed not so much to a want of true kindliness as to their restricted income and consequent love of thrift, to their rather cramped living space, and their careful and traditional *surveillance* of their *jeunes filles.* And because the French love their own land as they do, and leave it but seldom, they consequently feel a curious distrust of all strangers in intimate relations.

XI

THE *SALONS* OF PARIS

'*La causerie*,' or the art of conversation, always has been essentially a French accomplishment, and throughout history, from the days of Henry the Fourth—who used to take his son, the Duc Vendôme, to the *salon* of the famous Madame Paulet, so that he might be trained in the arts of '*la conversation et les belles manières*'—the *salon* in France has always played an important part in the political, literary, and artistic life of the nation.

Before speaking of the *salon*, it is perhaps well to explain further what the French understand by the word '*causerie*.' It means more than the word 'conversation' in English. It is essentially a French product, too, for among all the nations since the world began to be civilized, it has flourished the most in France. In other lands one can talk, discourse, dissert, discuss or converse—but one

does not *causer*. '*La causerie*' is not in the least to be confounded with conversation, chatting or chit-chat. It is a true art and a study in itself, and in order to understand it thoroughly and become proficient in it, one must follow a severe course of training first, as in all other arts. The art of '*la causerie*' never flourishes in new countries. It grows out of the social and intellectual spirit of an older and maturer nation, and the French have cultivated it more than any other people and have elaborated it into a true art. It can only be perfected in a country where the cult of form and the refinement of well-expressed thought reign supreme and are not subordinated to more material interests. In truth, the art of conversation attains its perfection only in a society which is essentially aristocratic mentally, that is to say which is composed of an *élite* long recognized as such. That is why this delicate art reached its absolute perfection during the eighteenth century in France, which was *par excellence* the century of extreme refinement in taste and culture.

If the art of conversation did not flourish in Greece and Rome, it must be remembered that there was good reason for this, for true conversation cannot exist without the feminine element, and in Athens, as in Rome, the women lived

sequestered lives. It was thus in Europe also till long after the Crusades, and it is still so in the East. That is why there is no *causerie* possible in such lands. Dissertations or discussions between men, who meet at clubs or public places to speak together of politics, business, art, alone are possible.

The Mediæval Ages, though they freed women somewhat, only transformed them from slaves into idols. Even the *Cour d'Amour* in France and the *conversazioni* in Italy, were not yet evolved into *causeries*. They were long speeches that were specially prepared and delivered by each guest in turn. They lacked the primordial essential of real *causerie*, which is spontaneity. For if it be prepared, determined or pre-arranged, it is no longer '*la causerie*.' Besides '*l'imprévu*,' vivacity of mind, clearness and accuracy of expression, as well as alert common sense and nimble wit, are indispensable to that *causerie* which is true art.

If I have taken some time to explain the exact meaning of '*causerie*,' it is because I have so very often heard the word erroneously applied by English-speaking people.

The object of the *salon* is twofold: to encourage the art of conversation between indi-

viduals who think and feel alike and to bring together men of power and action.

Considering that no *salon* and therefore no conversation could exist without the presiding genius of a *salonnière*, it will be easily understood, if the *salons* of Paris once ruled France, how great the influence of the women who presided over these *salons* must have been. Indeed it was in their character of *salonnières* alone that the great French ladies of the past held their power. Even when a *salonnière* happened to be a writer of repute and of great individual talent, she never wielded the same influence with her pen as with her *salon*.

The great *rôle* of the *salon* in the life of the nation is now a thing of the past. Modern life with its democratic aims has deflected its uses. The women of to-day are inclined to desire quantity rather than quality among their guests, and the spirit of exclusiveness and the high tone of the conversation held in the *salons* have thus disappeared. Besides this, the power of the *salons* was specially great before the power of the Press arose, and as the newspapers grew, the prestige and influence of the *salons*, by degrees, subsided.

The essential that compels success in French *salons*, both in past and present days is, *esprit*.

hout this one cannot hope to reign or compel attention. And by *esprit* is not necessarily meant *wit*. For wit is but a part of *esprit*—which has a larger and more comprehensive meaning. It signifies also intellectual culture, originality of understanding and thought, together with a certain brilliance of fancy and assimilative power. When this quality is possessed in a high degree by a certain number of people within the same *salon*, and when the mistress of that *salon* has sufficient tact and *savoir faire* to exclude all conflicting elements, then '*la causerie*' as it is understood in Paris becomes a skilful fencing of pointed sentences and a delicate and immediate assimilation of thought on all sides. And then indeed the art of conversation shows itself to be one of the most brilliant and delicate things which a refined civilization has yet produced.

But though occasionally there are to be found in the modern society of Paris those elements which formerly made Paris *salons* so great, their higher and more magnificent importance as a ruling power has certainly waned. Nevertheless their influence can be subtly and insidiously felt, even yet, because of the inherent taste of the French for this kind of discussion at their social gatherings, though, alas! the great power of a

Rambouillet, a Scudéry, a Julie de Lespinasse, a Madame Du Deffand, or a Madame Geoffrin, is no longer possible.

The *salonnière* is of course the life and mainstay of her own *salon*, which must necessarily be her own creation, for no *salon* can be inherited. She presides over it like a priestess at the shrine. Her word is law, for without her, her *salon* would cease to exist, and thus she still rules a certain set of Parisian society, though more indirectly and more occultly than formerly. For although the political and intellectual work of the nation is performed avowedly by the men, it is insidiously influenced by the women, even though they do not apparently take so direct a part in the life of their country as do the women of Anglo-Saxon lands.

Even if actual news is no longer disseminated by the *salons* of Paris to-day, it is still in a great measure prepared and controlled as well as criticized by them, and those who have not an *entrée* to one or the other of the more important *salons* of the day or hour, are likely to rank as complete outsiders of Paris life. Not that French *salonnières* are by nature *intriguantes*. Their influence is far wider spread, far more subtle and more lasting. They alone can reconcile apparently irreconcilable enemies, by smooth-

ing the social path for the useful combination of recalcitrant foes, and they alone can salve all wounds of vanity, successfully soothing all hurt susceptibilities.

Of late years four or five very influential *salons* have been closed by the death of their hostesses. Of these, one of the most interesting was that of the Comtesse Diane de Beausacq, whose Fridays were devoted mainly to conversation on literary subjects. The Comtesse, who was credited with very great influence at the Académie Française, had herself produced some clever volumes, but her fame was above all as a *salonnière*, and candidates for vacancies at the Académie were always eager to be admitted to Madame de Beausacq's exclusive circle, the chief supporters of which, at one time, were Sully Prudhomme and Pierre Loti. Madame de Beausacq made a point of always being at home every day at five o'clock, and as she lived in the centre of the city, scarcely a day passed without some interesting conversation in her *salon*. She has now been dead nearly ten years.

A rival *salon* to that of Madame de Beausacq, and a still more important one, was that of Madame Aubernon de Neuville, who died some five or six years ago, and who left the reputation of being not only one of the most famous but one of the most despotic of *salonnières* of our

days. Her *salon* was purely academical and literary. Almost every man of letters of note, during the twenty years her *salon* lasted, was her guest at some time or other. Among her more brilliant and regular *habitués* were both Renan and Taine, who were constantly in attendance every Friday evening.

The two rival political *salons* which typified the two conflicting elements of modern life in France were the *salons* of Madame Armand de Caillavet, who died only a year ago, and of the Comtesse de Loynes, who died about three years ago. Actually we have no *salon* in Paris so influential as were those two. In the days of the '*Grande Affaire*' the Dreyfusard party was represented by Madame Armand de Caillavet, the mother of the well-known dramatic writer. Her most famous *habitué* was Anatole France, and the part he took in that national upheaval is well known. '*Les idées nouvelles*' was the password for admission to the receptions of Madame de Caillavet, and all those of this particular persuasion assembled here to listen to the words of the *maître*.

Madame de Loynes' rival *salon* represented the old order of things, conservative ideas and the French traditions of the past—*la Noblesse*, *l'Armée*, and *l'Eglise*. These were stringently

defended here, one of the most brilliant conversationalists in their defence being Monsieur Jules Lemaître, of the French Academy.

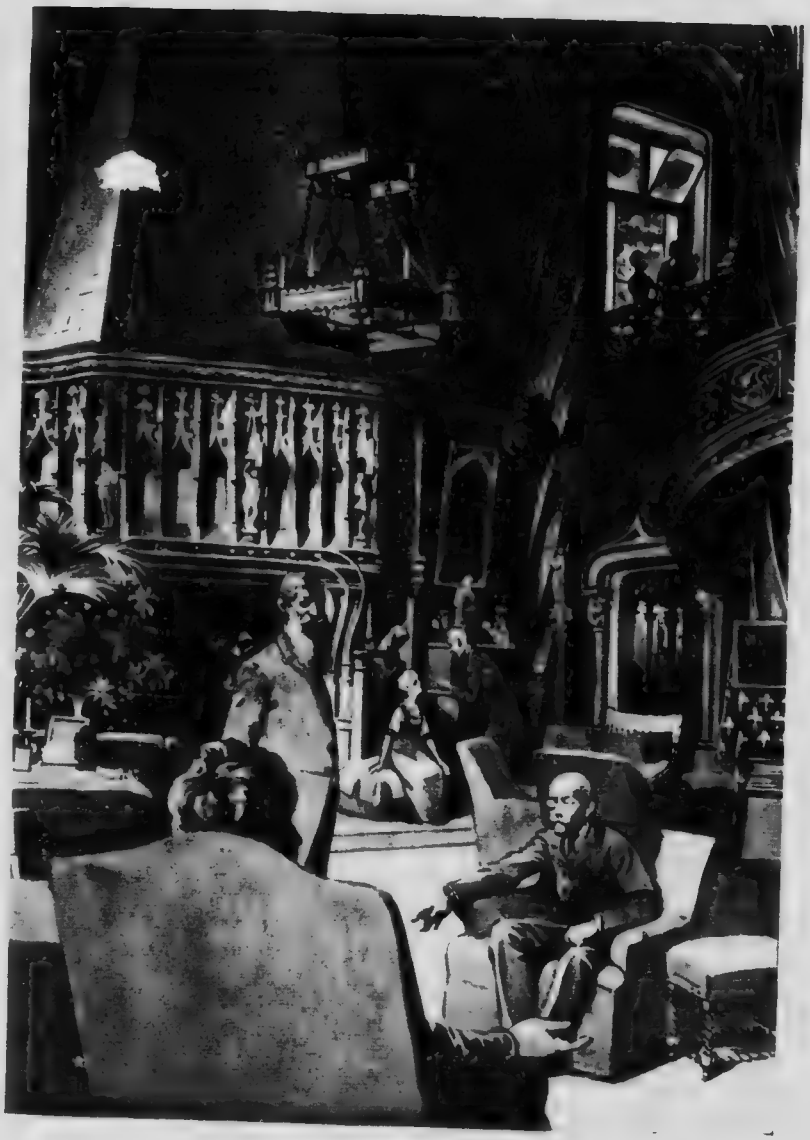
Another very famous *salon*, that was supreme in the days of the young Republic, though its power has now passed away, was the *salon* of Madame Juliette Adam, formerly directress of the *Nouvelle Revue* and herself a writer of power. Though advanced in years, Madame Adam still receives those of her *habitués* who are still faithful, every Sunday throughout the summer months at the old Abbaye de Gif, near Paris, in spite of the fact that her Paris *salon* is, alas! now dispersed. She was so influential in the seventies, that even Gambetta himself, it is said, owed much to her influence. A subsequent political *salon* was that of Madame Waldeck-Rousseau, although her power necessarily diminished after the death of her husband, the former Premier.

The literary *salon* of Madame Guillaume Beer still remains of its kind one of the most interesting of Paris. Madame Beer, who is partly Italian, is herself an able writer, and has done much to make modern Italian literature popular in France. One of her most famous *habitués* was the poet Lecomte de Lisle, whose life Madame Beer has recently published.

The celebrated woman painter, Madeleine

Lemaire, possesses one of the best artistic *salons* of to-day. The *bals costumés* she gives in her *atelier* of the Rue Monceau are world-famous.

At present there exists no great Parisian *salon* combining the forces of the great *salons* of the past. The conditions of modern life having greatly altered, the great power which one single hostess alone could wield formerly is now dispersed among lesser *coteries*. In fact, the whole of Parisian society of to-day is divided up into small sections or groups, each represented by its own *salon*, with its own high priestess in the person of the hostess. Surrounded by her own devoted *habitués*, who are as jealous of their rights and as intolerant of any new admission to their circle as the most exclusive of clubs, many younger hostesses are nevertheless now gaining power day by day, and new *salons* are arising which possibly may eventually replace those of more recent years. Of these, the literary *salons* of the Duchesse de Rohan, of the Comtesse de Pomairols—whose husband, a well-known poet and writer, will eventually be elected a member of the Académie Française—of Madame Guillaume Beer—herself a writer of great merit—are becoming powers that have to be reckoned with in Parisian society. To these must be added the *salons* of Madame Charles Max, of



THE SALON OF MADAME LOUIS STERN.
From a special drawing by Frédéric Régamey.

the Comtesse de Greffulhe and of Madame Louis Stern, where the best music in Paris is to be heard.

But though the younger *salonnières* of to-day may possess the necessary elements that might enable them to form *salons* of power like those of the past—for the Frenchwoman in herself remains ever the same, retaining the special qualities necessary to great leaders—the tendency of our modern life and thought is so thwarted and restricted by the great democratic spirit of the day, that modern hostesses find it most difficult to form restricted *salons*. They are themselves inclined to be too widely interested in general subjects of much diversity, and are too eclectic in their choice of guests as well as too indiscriminatingly hospitable, to be able to group around themselves the preponderantly powerful and influential *coterie* that is forcibly difficult of access.

The great element in France which has ever been the cause of difficulty in the building up of a *salon* is *la question politique*. Nothing separates French people so greatly as politics, for these affect not only social relations, but even family relations and all ideas and ideals in France —social, literary, artistic, and even scientific. It would be impossible to create a *salon* in Paris

that would purport to bring together any fiercely conflicting elements. A hostess is therefore bound to make her political choice before she can start forming her *salon*, which can only be composed of people who meet on the same general grounds and with the same general interests. For instance, no hostess in Paris would think of confronting Socialists with Royalists even at a purely literary gathering. The stories that are sometimes told in Paris about English rival politicians meeting, after a fierce and hot debate in the House, at the same dinner-party in the evening, are stories which French people hear with amazement. The few hostesses of Paris who have sought to conciliate even mildly conflicting political adversaries have never become centres of power or influence, and have been as unsuccessful as the *salons* of mixed nationalities.

Concerning these last, in the days before the *entente cordiale* a Frenchwoman of good family and high connections once made an effort to found a *salon* composed of English and French elements, in the hope that by bringing together representative people of the two nations, she might help to establish a feeling of understanding between two totally different comprehensions. But this was impossible to accomplish. The English guests, charmed at meeting sympathetic

compatriots, formed themselves into small groups to exchange ideas in their own language, leaving the French guests, in a sullen state of incomprehension, sitting silent by. In fact, the resentment of the French people who did not understand English, and yet were anxious to converse with the English guests, was so great that the hostess finally discontinued these receptions, fearing to bring about a state of affairs which was exactly contrary to her object in forming the *salon*.

The organizing of an influential *salon* is the favourite means of power for a clever Frenchwoman who has passed the age of compliments and *succès de femme*. When her days for admiration are over, if she has a brain she consoles herself with the possession of power, and this can only be obtained satisfactorily by means of a *salon*. But the building up of it is a long and laborious task, and demands qualities which are very special and which are not possessed by all.

It is very interesting to observe the methods of the intending *salonnière*, and those who have lived long in Paris and mixed much in the social life of the city have many opportunities of watching how she sets to work. For several seasons in succession she accepts all invitations that come to her, and selects fresh

acquaintances everywhere, inviting them in great numbers to her own receptions, and sowing her invitations broadcast, more particularly amongst those who already are celebrities or who are about to become so—and this very often much to the distaste of those hostesses who invite her, for she ruthlessly allures their most cherished *habitués*, and very often takes them away altogether. Her instinct must teach her to discover young people of unrecognized ability, and these will gladly flock to her *salon* in its early days, for they will appreciate her usefulness, knowing that she will be of great help to the young and ambitious writers, politicians, or artists who have yet to make their name. Thus for a few seasons she brings a crowd of various people—often of conflicting opinions, for at first she is wilfully regardless of their personal tastes—to her *salon*. Then by degrees she restricts her invitations, and gradually, having made a more cautious choice of acquaintances, she undertakes a careful process of filtering. Often the totally unknown personalities of her *salon*, who were first discovered by her, become ultimately the prop and mainstay of her power, and her *salon* finally becomes so exclusive that outsiders find it difficult to penetrate within its sacred precincts after the *salon* is

constituted and has become a recognized power. Indeed, the older *habitués* are often more intolerant of fresh admissions than the hostess herself, and she finds herself obliged to consult them before admitting a new-comer to their circle.

It is easy to understand that the making of a great *salon* is an arduous task that cannot be accomplished quickly, and the *salonnière* who wishes her receptions to be successful must devote all her time and energy to her *salon*, treating it almost as a business. In fact, it *is* a business for her, for it is her sole *raison d'être*. Above all, she herself must be entirely dependable, and her *habitués* must always be certain of finding her at home at her own special hours throughout the whole season, early and late. She must be amongst the first to return to Paris after the summer vacation, and she must remain in the city to the very end of the season. She must treat her *habitués* as children that must in no way be neglected. Many *salonnières* will not allow their authority to relax even during the summer recess, and continue their receptions throughout the summer months at some country residence near Paris. Madame Aubernon de Neuville never allowed her circle to be broken up, and entertained regularly from May to October at

her delightful eighteenth-century house—Le Manoir du Cœur Volant, at Marly—which is now the summer residence of Henri Bataille. A near neighbour is Madame Guillaume Beer, who owns the part of the property that once belonged to Madame Du Barry at Louveciennes. She also receives her friends here throughout the summer, and it was while he was staying at her house during the summer retreat that the great poet Lecomte de Lisle died some years ago.

The true *salonnière* never allows any personal consideration or amusement to interfere with her reception days. Not only is she always to be found at her post at the appointed hour, but not even ill-health will prevent her doing her duty, for she knows well that with the slightest relaxation her influence would begin to wane immediately. A certain famous hostess whose *salon* was powerful to the end—and she died at the ripe age of ninety—made it a practice throughout all the years of her power to stay one day in bed each week, systematically, whether she were ill or not, so as to be always fresh at her receptions.

A *salonnière* need not necessarily be the most intellectual nor the most witty woman of her own circle, but she must possess *de l'esprit*,

tact, and an assimilative brain. She may not be brilliantly original, but she must be what the French call an *esprit distingué*. This does not necessitate either *distinction* of birth or of education, but distinction of mind.

One of the greatest *salonnières* of the past was Madame Geoffrin, yet neither by her family connections—for she was the daughter of a *valet de chambre* of the Dauphine and the wife of an ignorant though wealthy *bourgeois*—nor by her education, which was certainly defective considering the time in which she lived, did she seem destined to preside over a great and powerful *salon*. Yet she accomplished this in the eighteenth century, that most exclusive and exacting period, when birth and family counted for so much, because of her qualities of heart and of *esprit*. It was in the *salon* of Madame de Tencin, where *esprit* was prized above all things, that Madame Geoffrin began to shine despite her lack of elegance and personal distinction. Her power of assimilation was very great, and in the *milieu* of Madame Tencin the brilliance of her mind became more refined. When Madame Tencin died, Madame Geoffrin, who was in some ways her pupil and who had acquired a certain sovereignty in her *salon*, had but to invite the *habitués* of Madame de Tencin to her own house in the

Rue Saint Honoré to found her own *salon*. At that time she was forty-two years old and neither elegant nor beautiful. The *cuisine* at her dinner-parties was quite plain and was not to be compared to the delicacy of the viands to which her *habitués* were accustomed. Her husband was hardly presentable—indeed, almost stupid—and never opened his mouth except to eat. The *habitués* paid not the slightest attention to him nor he to them. When he died, his disappearance passed unnoticed. One day, however, negligently, at table one of the *habitués* asked, 'What has become of the good man who used to dine here and never spoke?' 'Oh,' said Madame Geoffrin casually, 'he was my husband. He is dead. . . .' And she quietly resumed the interrupted conversation.

It is essential that the *salonnière* be supremely gifted with a keen social instinct. She must never put herself forward, yet she must be able to start and to direct a conversation amongst her guests, drawing the best out of each conversationalist and grouping the right people together. Once having accomplished this and having led each *causeur* to speak upon his favourite topic, she must efface herself and remain more or less subservient for the rest of the evening. She must not be too self-

effaced either, although she must not entice *personal* attention. She must lead the conversation rather than take an actual part in it, though within the precincts of her *salon* her word must be law and her opinion deferred to with respect. Above all, she must so draw out each individual guest as to make him feel that he wishes to do his best.

She need not be wealthy nor even necessarily well-born, as the example of Madame Geoffrin proves, although she will be greatly aided by high social and family relations. These will give her a tone and position which will be of infinite use to her, for in French society especially it is necessary to know all the *tenants et aboutissants* of each person whom one entertains in one's house. It will also be useful if she be sufficiently rich to be able to give a weekly dinner-party of about twelve people, other guests being invited after dinner to take part in the talk. The number of guests at the table being thus limited, the conversation can be general, which is the object of every hostess who understands the art of receiving. Indeed, the division of *causeurs* into small groups who discuss *en aparté*, as is so often the case in England, is fatal to *causerie* in a *salon*.

Notwithstanding that a weekly dinner to which

all the *habitués* are invited in turn is a powerful element which greatly aids the success of a *salon*, some famous hostesses of past and present days have often treated their guests to the scantiest fare. But even this has not lessened their power. The story of Madame de Maintenon—at that time Madame Scarron—whose guests were regaled with a *bonne histoire*, told by the hostess, in place of the *rôti*, is well known. In more recent days, Sardou was fond of relating anecdotes concerning the *salon* of Madame Gavarni, the wife of the famous illustrator, which flourished in the early fifties, where the only refreshments offered to the guests, who arrived at nine o'clock and left in the early hours of the following morning after many brilliant tournaments of wit, were roasted chestnuts and brimming mugs of cider!

Certain hostesses show great tyranny in arranging the conversation so as to allow each guest to speak in turn. At Madame Aubernon de Neuville's Friday dinners, to which twelve guests were invited—never more and never less—a bell was placed upon the table at the right hand of the hostess, and when any particular guest was inclined to forget the order of the conversation as it had been organized by her, Madame Aubernon would ring the delin-

quent to order. At the close of each dinner a 'subject for discussion' at the following meeting of the same guests was given out. An amusing anecdote is told concerning the young bride of a famous editor, who made a mistake and 'prepared' the wrong subject. '*Aujourd'hui nous allons causer du divorce*,' proclaimed Madame Aubernon de Neuville from her seat at the top of the table. '*Quel dommage!*' exclaimed the young wife; '*Je n'avais préparé que l'adultère!*'

Madame Aubernon insisted upon being extremely just in her distribution of time-limits to each speaker, and this irrespective of their talents or celebrity. A tale is told that one evening while a minor personage was speaking, Renan, who was seated at the right hand of his hostess, tried to interrupt the speech of his fellow-guest. '*Attendez, attendez!*' cried Madame Aubernon, silencing the author of *La Vie du Christ* with an energetic hand. '*Vous aurez votre tour. . . .*' And Renan was forced to remain silent.

Meanwhile the servants handed round various luscious dishes, dessert had been put upon the table, and other speakers had taken their turns. Finally, towards the end of the dinner, each having spoken, Madame Aubernon turned to Renan. 'Now, *cher Maître*,' she said, with an ingratiating smile, 'will you tell us what you

were going to say just now when you wanted to interrupt Mr. X.?' 'Oh,' said Renan casually, 'it was quite unimportant. I merely wished to ask you to let me have another helping of those delicious green peas. . . .'

XII

THE ANGLO-SAXON COLONY OF PARIS

Of all the foreign colonies of Paris—I mean those sets of foreign residents who make their home in Paris, either permanently or for long periods—the Anglo-Saxon colony, though not the largest, is the one which will certainly interest my readers the most. It is perhaps the one which amalgamates the least with the Parisian inhabitants, retaining its own national customs, habits, and modes of living the longest. This probably arises largely from the fact that the English-speaking races acquire French with more difficulty than such races as, for instance, the Russians, Roumanians, Germans, or Italians, or even the Scandinavians, whose own culture is so largely based upon French culture. Of the six hundred thousand foreigners—the old Athenians would have called them the *Métèques*—who reside in Paris, the Germans are the most important group and are only outnumbered by the

Belgians. After these, the largest foreign colony is that of the Italians, and in order of numerical importance come the Swiss, the Russians, the English, the Americans, the Austrians, the Spanish, the Roumanians, the Dutch, the Servians, the Turkish, and the Scandinavians. But it is only fair to discriminate and to explain that the Anglo-Saxon colony is composed of people of a better class than many of the other colonists, and that many Germans, Swiss, Italians, &c., who live in Paris are there to earn their own living in various trades or in domestic service. As for the foreign visitors who reside only a short time in the capital, at the Préfecture de Police they are estimated at five hundred thousand a year.

Roughly speaking, the foreign residents of Paris are of three distinct groups—those who come to Paris for pleasure, those who come to study art, music, or science, and those who come to earn their own living in the French capital. Among the Anglo-Saxons the largest is probably the pleasure-seeking class, though it is rivalled in numbers by the students, who often settle for several consecutive years in Paris to study painting and sculpture, architecture, music, or medicine. Indeed, the colony of these students is so large that its residential quarters occupy

quite a large portion of the Quartier Latin. Here they live, sometimes in great poverty, but as much as is possible according to their own ways and customs, sometimes occupying but a single room or a studio, doing their own housework and eating out at the cheap restaurants of the Quartier, where they meet in small national groups. Both men and women attend the classes of the various art schools most plentifully situated in the vicinity, or sometimes even the more official *cours* of the Beaux-Arts. For France is the most generous-hearted of art patrons, and admits the eager, enthusiastic youth of all lands to the teachings—often gratuitously given—of her own greatest artists.

Socially this large contingent of art devotees of the Quartier does not exist. The students mix only with their own fellow-workers, being too strenuously devoted to their own studies to find time for festive duties. In many cases, too, it must be admitted they strike too much fear in the more *bourgeois* breasts of their smarter compatriots on the other side of the river—doubtless perhaps because of their wild ways and often still wilder appearance—for these soberer folk to invite them to their houses.

The more fashionable portion of the Anglo-Saxon colony consists of rich English or

Americans who have settled in Paris, or of those professional men and their families who reside there in the interests of their own careers. But even these form a distinct colony that lives entirely apart from French life. It not only keeps its own customs and manners, but does not assimilate those of its French neighbours. The Americans, however, being themselves of a more mixed race, amalgamate more easily with the French than do the English. Their point of view is never insular or narrow, and their sympathies are far more open to France and things French. Yet unless they intermarry with French families, or unless they speak the French language extremely well, their common tongue leads them rather to associate with English residents.

The Anglo-Saxon colony in Paris touches Parisian life in its outer aspects only, by means of the *cafés*, the theatres, public entertainments, shops, &c. Its sole link with the Parisians is by means of the *concierge*, the servants, or the tradespeople. Of those French families whose position and standing corresponds to their own, the English living in Paris know nothing, and are totally ignored by them. Indeed, there are a great many Parisians of Paris who would be astonished to learn that an

English colony existed in Paris at all! The English and American daily papers report from Paris the doings of the Anglo-Saxon colony of Paris as if they were the doings of the French residents, so few opportunities do French families afford them for attending French entertainments.

When, by chance, efforts have been made to bring together such irreconcilable camps, the hostesses who have made that endeavour have been obliged to renounce their intentions. I myself, after many repeated trials, even at small gatherings, have found it difficult to continue to invite English and French people together in numbers. They immediately divide up into two camps, and although the French make endless polite efforts to enter into conversation with the English present, it is generally the English man or woman who gets bored the first, and who, making for the nearest English-speaking person, takes up the conversation in his or her own language, leaving the French guests in a state of astonished irritation because their advances have not been met half-way. Strange to say, English people do not seem to realize that the French resent their carrying on a conversation before them in a language which they do not understand, and are hurt by a lack of

courtesy. In the opinion of the French, these rather repellent manners of the English are the more incomprehensible because, when Frenchmen themselves venture abroad, if only for a very short time, they are always most anxious to inquire beforehand what are the customs of the country they are about to visit, so as not to offend the inhabitants by ignorance of their ways. Though a Frenchman does not wear evening dress at home every evening, as an Englishman does, yet when in London he changes his clothes at seven every evening because Londoners do. I am continually being asked by French friends going over to London for a short stay what clothes one must take, how one must dress for the restaurants or the theatre, &c., what are the customs for calling, card-leaving, tipping, &c. It is therefore not to be wondered at that the manners of English settlers in Paris are often considered by Parisians as a lack of breeding that proceeds from ignorance—often wilful ignorance, it must be admitted—of French customs; and the French, so punctilious in such matters themselves, are naturally inclined to resent the want of respect which English people show for their national habits. For instance, I have often been asked by Parisians, 'How is it that

English people, who wear evening dress every day after seven o'clock at night in their own country, do not hesitate to appear at our Opera House—often in the best seats—in their travelling clothes, or to walk in the smartest part of the Bois in an attire which they would only use for shooting on the moors at home, smoking briar-wood pipes, accompanied by their wives and daughters in bicycling costumes?'

I have often pointed out, in defence of these English, that those who do these things are probably in Paris on a short stay, with scarcely any luggage, and would aver that, being abroad where nobody knows them and they know nobody, it does not much matter what they do. The French reply that when they go to London in exactly the same conditions they nevertheless make great efforts not to offend the tastes or even the prejudices of the inhabitants. In reality—let it be frankly admitted—the ordinary travelling Englishman has a supreme contempt for all 'beastly foreigners,' and cares in no way to conciliate their opinions. He pays his way abroad, and he thinks that is sufficient.

Again, in defence of the English man or woman who thus offends the taste of the Parisians by his or her manners or accoutre-

ment, I have often explained that the 'tripper' who smokes a pipe in the street—an unforgivable heresy in the eyes of all Frenchmen—or who goes to the opera in check knickerbockers and a deerstalker cap, is not a truly representative type of the genus Englishman, but only the representative of a *class* that is as ignorant of good manners at home as abroad, and that the really well-bred English man or woman, being in no way conspicuous in the Paris streets or places of entertainment, passes unobserved. Therefore, those Parisians who judge a whole nation from a few exaggerated examples, judge as erroneously as do those English people who represent the typical Frenchman as a caricatural creature with waxed moustachios, a huge cravat bow, and much gesticulation. Of course, there do exist such types in France—though the excessive gesticulation is rather characteristic of Marseilles than of Paris—but they are no more typically representative of their countrymen than the caricatural Englishman with yellow check knickers and prominent teeth.

The principal reasons why amalgamation between English residents in Paris and French people is difficult seem to be, strange to say, in a great measure the result of some of the

best characteristics of both the English and French nations. What has made the Englishman the best and greatest colonist in the world is that quality that leads him, wherever he goes, to retain his own habits, customs, and characteristics. He is not in the least assimilative, nor tries to be, and is most conservative in his personal tastes, which he generally manages, in the end, to force upon others. Herein lies his strength when he has to deal with inferior civilizations, and thereby he subjugates them completely. Even when he respects the indigenous qualities of the country in which he lives, he regards them with the somewhat quizzical eye of tolerance, but makes no effort to acquire them for himself. He is English, he avers, in explanation, and the term, to his mind, is equivalent to 'excellent,' 'unimpeachable.' But if these inherent qualities of the Englishman make him an admirable colonist among savages, they debar him from understanding and appreciating the qualities of the civilized races amongst whom his lot is thrown.

The chief characteristic of the French colony in London, for instance, is its quick assimilation of English life, manners, and customs. French residents find it very difficult to live in a French way in English towns. The houses are

not arranged like the flats of the larger French cities. The servants are different, too; the cooking arrangements, also; and even the meat at the English butcher's is cut up in a fashion that in no way resembles the processes of a French *boucherie*.

So a French family soon relinquishes its own household ways, and is forced to abandon its better methods of French cookery to content itself with the large joints and fruit tarts of the English household. If there are children in the family, they will probably go to English schools, and, mixing with English children, be invited into English homes. So they will come into contact with English life, bringing back English examples to their French family, who assimilate them quickly. The French family will read English newspapers, and very soon abandon their subscriptions to their own home periodicals. Above all, they will find amongst the English residents a far kinder and better welcome, and a far wider, though simpler hospitality than the English family, settling in Paris, will meet with on the part of French residents. For the French family circle is sacred to its members alone, and is relentlessly, inexorably closed to all outsiders. Every French family is as a nation in itself and even

to the most cynical of Parisians, at all periods of his existence, *la famille* is a sacred thing. When the French do admit strangers within their gates, they require to know everything about those strangers first- their position, their means, the situation and standing of their family, not only in the present but several generations back, and even to the minutest details of their incomes, &c. Indeed the French always make the frankest enquiries about any one's family—French or English—with whom they are about to be brought into contact, for in France everybody must know about everybody, and the slightest stain upon the honour of any member of a family affects all its members alike. This inquisitiveness is offensive to British settlers, and they resent it greatly.

As I have explained before, a great argument against informal hospitality among the French is the fact that young girls of a French family are most carefully guarded—so that young strangers, both male and female, are carefully avoided, because of the example they might give of too much freedom among the sexes, which is not accepted in France for young unmarried people. Careful French mothers will not admit within the sacred precincts of *le foyer* examples of emancipation which are

not *bien reçus* among French traditions and would tend to unsettle the minds of their daughters.

In all their more superficial relations with the Anglo-Saxon colony, French *bourgeois* families, though distant, are courteous and extremely polite. Those foreigners who come with letters of introduction are affably, though formally, received *en visite*, and their call is afterwards returned with due ceremony and within the correct time-limit. But the relations end there. As I have said, the French will not take strangers on trust, which is the charming attitude of the hospitable English; and always at the back of their minds, not having migratory tastes themselves, they are inclined to suppose that foreigners who have left their own country to settle elsewhere must have had reasons to do so that might not always be avowable. Even among students of the Latin Quarter, where less convention is observed, French students who meet their English and American colleagues in all the larger *ateliers* do not invite them to their own homes. Even among these scoffers at convention, the French and the English-speaking camps are distinctly separate, each having its own particular haunts; and though the relations between them inside the institution where they meet for a common

teaching are quite cordial, they rarely go beyond.

Nevertheless it is only fair to mention here that those American or English artists who, studying in Paris, show a real and compelling talent, are the first to be openly recognized and frankly acclaimed by their French colleagues. In regions of art, French people seem to recognize no barriers of nationality dividing them from the artists of other lands, and it is interesting to compare the attitude of the prudent *bourgeois*, who always keeps the 'outsider' at a respectful distance, with that of the more generous-hearted artist. To all public exhibitions of pictures in France foreign artists are admitted, without any introduction or special invitation, to compete with national talent, and the spontaneous generous recognition of a foreigner's superior ability is one of the finest characteristics of French criticism. It is well to bear this in mind when speaking of the lack of hospitality in France, for it proves that French hospitality, though rarely manifested in a material sense, is certainly not inexistent.

The English or American resident in France only really assimilates French life by means of international marriages. The American wives

of Frenchmen of the aristocracy usually soon become part of the family they marry into, and often espouse even the family prejudices. This is also often the case with Englishwomen who marry French husbands. Indeed, I have known many who, after a few years of marriage, have become so enthusiastically French that they have not a good word to say for England or English ways afterwards!

It has been remarked, however, that if an English or American wife amalgamates well with a French family, this is not the case when a Frenchwoman marries an Englishman or an American. It is a curious fact which I am not prepared to discuss at the present moment in this chapter, but which might be most interesting to investigate later.

Yet notwithstanding these reservations, and notwithstanding the fact that, individually, French families do not welcome the Anglo-Saxon residents of Paris very warmly, it is quite noticeable that during recent years, and since the *entente cordiale* more especially, there has been a tremendous impetus in France towards all Anglo-Saxon ways and methods. The French have gradually wakened to the fact of the greatness of English character, and have begun to realize the necessity of the

training of character, as well as of brain, among their youth. Colleges for French boys, based upon English educational principles, have been created in various parts of France, where sports and outdoor games exist as an important feature of the programmes of education, and the morning tub is an inevitable institution. French boys are here trained to a sense of personal discipline and self-reliance. I have explained in a former chapter how they are taught English upon a perfectly sound basis, and certainly the school population of France to-day is beginning to speak English fluently and correctly. Even young French girls of this more advanced and progressive period are educated *à l'anglaise* or *à l'américaine*. *L'Anglo-Saxonisme* has even become a form of snobbery. It is considered very *chic* to have English tastes and to adopt English ways and customs. *Le five o'clock* has become as French an institution as it is an English one. French journalists, in their eager desire to appear English, have even been known to coin English words, in their *chroniques mondaines*, which exist not at all in the English language!

Thus have I read with interest such sentences as the following:

'*Le* footing *hier au Bois était très élégant*,'

meaning to indicate that the people on foot in the Bois were very smartly attired. The reporter, having learnt the words 'walking' and 'dancing,' evidently believed that the word *footing* might be coined on what he supposed to be the same principle, and had inferred that the word *le footing* was equivalent to the word *walking!*

Another charming sentence I once read was this: '*Tout le* shopping *était au Bois ce matin.*'

I must admit that I cannot see what is meant by this last sentence, as there are of course no shops in the Bois, but the man who wrote it —poor Jean Lorrain—was evidently quite certain that it was *très Anglo-Saxon!* . . .

XIII

HOUSEKEEPING IN PARIS

THERE seems to be a general opinion in England—as erroneous as are most general opinions of the kind—that it is cheaper to live in Paris than in London. This is one of the most absurd beliefs there can be.

When impoverished English Society decide to come to live in France so as to live economically, they do not choose Paris. But even if they did so, and though they might manage to live there more cheaply than in London, that would be, not because Paris is cheaper than London, but merely because, being unknown there and living away from their fashionable friends, they would choose to live in a far simpler style.

When young English people come to Paris as students, they are willing to cater far more economically than at home, for often their total expenses represent only a part of their general home expenses, and in Paris they must pay for

rent, firing, light, &c., besides a good many other things they would have *gratis* in their own home. But they are also willing to live in a far less costly manner and to 'rough it' more than in their family homes. Were they to live the same kind of life in London, they would find their expenses still lower, for the Latin Quarter is not nearly as cheap as a London suburb, either in matters of rent or of other necessities.

Family housekeeping in Paris, however, is not necessarily so cumbersome, though it is more complicated a business than in London, requiring much thrift, forethought, and good management. A French housekeeper, however large her family table may be, never has recourse to the large dinner joint and the heavy puddings that Englishwomen seem to consider the end-all and be-all of the weekly bill of fare. The French mother of a family is obliged to give herself endless trouble to devise and to consider new daily *menus*. French housewives buy in small quantities, having but scant accommodation for storage in the restricted space of a flat. They do their shopping day by day, buying all provisions as they are used. This assures more freshness and a greater variety of food, and though the system is more expensive in one sense, it is more economical in another, for the provisions consumed

are of the best and choicest quality, and there is no possible waste, for only the best portions of each comestible are sold. General household goods are no cheaper in Paris by being bought in large quantities, and housekeepers wisely believe that their *bonne-à-tout-faire* would be inclined to be more lavish and wasteful if there were unlimited stores of goods in the house. Even coal is not bought in large quantities to be kept in the cellar. It is generally brought in by the sack each week and kept in the kitchen close at hand in a special coal-box built for the purpose, which holds sufficient for the week's fuel, and is under the strict supervision of the mistress of the household. The French housekeeper whose family lives up on a fourth or fifth story avoids keeping coal down in the cellar, to be brought up a scuttleful at a time laboriously by the maid-of-all-work. Wine, too, and the storing of it, is a great question in Paris housekeeping. In most French families it is purchased by the barrel of 240 litres direct from the grower. A man whose special work consists in bottling and corking wine is hired in by the day to filter and bottle the wine, which is stored in the cellar. The key of this cellar is kept by the prudent mistress herself, who sends down the servant to bring up wine by

the dozen or half-dozen bottles for the family consumption in a wire basket specially contrived for the purpose. But she does well to keep a strict surveillance of the cellar, to visit it often herself and count the bottles, for if, as it so often happens, her maid be a great friend of the *concierge*, she will discover sooner or later that much of her own wine, and her coal too, is well appreciated at the *loge*. For this reason, housekeepers who have but small families often order their wine from the nearest wine-store by the dozen or half-dozen bottles, as well as their coal by the sack. Though purchased at a dearer price it becomes cheaper in the end, if one considers what large depredations are thus avoided. Indeed, the whole aim of the Paris housekeeper is to avoid waste and to practise economy in good materials rather than seek to buy cheaper materials. And so far as the household table is concerned, it is, in some ways, simpler to manage this in Paris than elsewhere, because of the system that French butchers and various tradespeople have of serving small quantities of each kind of food. The advantage of this is that while it at first appears that one pays a higher price for each article, one secures the best quality and the best portion of each sort of provision, without the

slightest waste of any kind. Moreover, many dishes for small households can be bought ready cooked at such cheap rates that it would be impractical to attempt to prepare them at home. All that is necessary is to warm up the ready-made dish in the oven or under the gas range. The larger stores of Paris, such as Potin, Couté, Luce, Damoy, &c., each of which has several branches in each quarter of the city, sell these ready-prepared dishes at most reasonable prices. Thus a dish of really excellent beef hash that is amply sufficient for two people is sold at Potin's ready for re-warming up at the modest price of 80 centimes, *plus* a small deposit upon the dish, which is refunded when it is returned. At all the large stores the large assortment of these cooked dishes, always ready on sale, is renewed each day. Such are: *Coquilles* of salmon, of lobster, or of turbot, at prices varying from 50 to 75 centimes per *coquille*. A *coquille* is a scallop shell in which the prepared and cooked food is sold, which serves as a temporary plate that can be thrown away after use. When warmed up under a gas range for a few moments these *coquilles* serve as an excellent *entrée* to a small family meal. Besides these smaller and rather more luxurious dainties, there is ever a wide choice of such dishes as

bœuf à la mode, boiled beef with tomato sauce, *sauté* rabbit, tripe dressed in various ways, and chicken wing or leg in jelly. Sauerkraut, too, ready prepared with Frankfort sausages, can be bought very cheaply, as also lobster salad with *mayonnaise* sauce, *vol au vent*, *bouchées à la reine*, Russian vegetable salad, slices cut from all kinds of cold roast joints, &c. Besides these, each day of the week special dishes can be bought. Thus, quoting from the price list of one of the large stores, here are the special dishes of the week :—

MONDAY.

Cassoulet (a sort of stew of mutton or beef and haricot beans with tomato sauce). Price 1.25, sufficient for two.

Dressed eels. Price 1.60 for two.

Pork chops with Robert sauce. 1.20 for two people.

TUESDAY.

Calf's head *en tortue*. 1.40.

Veal *à la jardinière* with various vegetables. Price 1.50 for two.

Boiled beef with tomato sauce. 90 centimes for two people.

Timbales Milanaises. 35 centimes per person.

Coquilles of filleted soles. 75 centimes per person.

WEDNESDAY.

Cassoulet. 1.25.

Pieds de mouton, à la sauce poulette. 1 franc for two people.

Roast veal with *purée* of sorrel. 1.25 for two people.

Pork chops, sauce Robert. 1.20.

THURSDAY.

Stuffed pigeons in jelly. 2.25 for two people.
Calf's head *en tortue*. 1.40.
Cold roast leg of mutton with *mayonnaise* sauce. 1.50 for two people.
Timbales Milanaises. 35 centimes each.

FRIDAY.

(On which day little or no meat is eaten in French families.)
Matelotte of eels. 1.60 for two people.
Raie au beurre noir. 1 franc for two people.
Freshly made *nouilles* (a kind of macaroni) *au gratin*. 60 centimes for two.

SATURDAY.

Pieds de mouton à la poulette. 1 franc.
Cassoulet. 1.25.
Veal *à la jardinière*. 1.50.
Pork chops with Robert sauce. 1.20.
Veal cutlets *à la financière*. 1.60.

SUNDAY.

Chicken, sauce *chasseur*. 1.75 for two people.
Veal *à la jardinière*. 1.50.
Pigeons in jelly. 2.25.
Calf's head *en tortue*. 1.40.
Coquilles of filleted soles. 75 centimes each.
Timbales Milanaises. 35 centimes each.

It will be seen from the above prices that it is practically cheaper to buy such ready-made dishes than to make them at home if the household be small, for thus both time and labour are spared. The single *bonne* can go to the market

and bring back one or two such dishes and then turn her attention to other necessary household work. For luncheon especially these dishes are most useful. Few Parisian families now eat meat twice a day. Even wealthy people have come to realize the advantages of a half vegetarian diet and a vegetable soup, in which the French excel, followed by a single dish of vegetables or eggs, *pâtés alimentaires* (by which is meant macaroni, *nouilles*, and such edibles), with a dish of fresh or stewed fruit is all that is generally consumed of late years in most Parisian families at the evening meal.

When a Parisian housekeeper wishes to give a small dinner-party, even though she may keep but one domestic, this is comparatively easy, because of the facilities for buying dishes made outside. Many society hostesses manage thus. Notwithstanding their single *bonne-à-tout-faire*, they are in the habit of 'receiving' once a week and giving a dinner-party of about eight guests. The entertainment is thus easily achieved. It must be remembered that in France one rarely asks one's friends to 'drop in' casually to dinner or even to lunch. When one entertains, one gives oneself endless trouble to order a delicate repast of dainty dishes that one does not order for one's own everyday meal, and which are also

a special delight to one's friends. In all parts of the city there are restaurants and *patisseries* that serve ready-made dishes of a very superior class, where a hostess has but to order in advance the required dishes, which are carefully prepared and specially cooked for her dinner-party. These luscious dainties could not be prepared at home in the kitchen of a small flat by the single maid-of-all-work. All the large restaurants known for their *spécialités* send these out in specially covered *casseroles*, ready hot, that can be served almost at once. *Patissiers* prepare similar dishes, perhaps a little cheaper, and it is the hostess's business to know exactly *where* each dish must be ordered. She must thoroughly possess the knowledge of Parisian *spécialités* and order her *menu* accordingly. The soup may come from one place, the fish from some celebrated fish restaurant, the various meats, sweets, salads and ices in succession from the various confectioners and restaurants whose *spécialité* each individually is. A good hostess who knows her Paris well is most careful to order each separate course at the right place. This is the supreme art she is required to possess. Those who do not want the trouble of ordering *spécialité* dinners make an arrangement with a single restaurant or *patissier*, who provides the

whole meal and furnishes everything from the soup to the dessert, even including a *maître d'hotel* to serve the dinner when required. But even in that case the *menu* is carefully considered and scrupulously chosen by the hostess herself. In such cases the caterer furnishes the whole meal at so much per head, including wine and service. Many wives of official men arrange their large official dinners thus, and it is the system resorted to by most Cabinet Ministers in power for their large state banquets.

Thus it is always easy in a Paris household to arrange an impromptu dinner. All the larger *patissiers* are prepared for this contingent and always have excellent ready-made dishes ready prepared to send off at once on order by word of mouth or by telephone.

In poorer households there is of course no way of obtaining ready-made dishes within a reasonable price, but most of the wives of working men in Paris are excellent managers, buying the cheaper parts of meat to concoct soups and stews for their families. Yet even the working people are not averse to indulging occasionally in a ready-cooked dish for Sundays or holidays, bought at one of the large stores at the prices I have just quoted. Besides this, for the very small purses of quite poor people, there are certain quarters

of Paris where portions of dishes left over from the various restaurants and large private houses are sold very cheaply to working people. At the Madeleine market, for instance, many cooks of the larger and richer families of the neighbourhood increase their perquisites, among other ways, by selling the remains of the dishes that have not been consumed upon their masters' table. I have seen large portions of excellent omelettes, the remains of cold roast meat, or chicken, portions of *sole Normande*, small bowlfuls of *crême à la vanille*, a few spoonfuls of delicate green peas, &c., sold to the working people of the quarter, who thus are saved the trouble of cooking their own food and obtain a better-class dish as well. Nevertheless, though it does exist to a large extent, this is not a general method with the working classes.

On the whole, the actual table expenses of a family in Paris are somewhat higher than those of a corresponding family in London. But this is due to two causes that lie outside the influence of the thrifty housekeeper. The first is that the actual price of food in Paris is much higher than in London, and the second reason is that French families insist upon a much better table and are far more critical of their food than the English, and therefore enjoy much

better prepared food than English families of the same position. Take, for instance, a *petit bourgeois* earning the modest income of 5,000 francs (£200) a year. In the French family, the food consumed at the family table will be of better quality and will be more varied, and above all better prepared and cooked, than the dishes which the corresponding English family will enjoy, even though sometimes it will not be as well *served up* as dishes at an English table.

But it is only fair to say that the rate of living in Paris would be still far higher than it is, were it not for the excellent administration of the French women. In a Paris kitchen nothing in ever lost or wasted, and everything is subjected to the scrutinizing eye of the mistress of the house, who knows to a nicety the resources of her *gardemanger*. The tiniest scraps of meat, bread, vegetables, &c., are made use of, and never is the slightest piece of butter or fat allowed to be thrown away. Even the spoonful of cold vegetables left over from the day before is warmed up and put into the centre of an omelette, or is added to a soup to give it a particular flavour, or if sufficient in quantity is transformed into a vegetable salad. The preparing of the meat by the Paris butcher is also far more economical. The animal is cut up in a more profitable

manner, and often those parts which in an English kitchen would be thrown away or given to the domestic animals to consume are made into excellent dishes. The very smallest part of the sheep or calf can be sold separately, for the animal is not divided up into the large joints that one knows in English butchers' shops, and which make it so impossible for poorer people, who cannot afford an entire joint, to obtain any of the better cuts of the meat. And though French meat is far more expensive per pound than English meat, the actual cost is reduced by the fact that every morsel the butcher sells his customer is eatable and there can be no waste.

I shall always remember the dismay of a young French lady who, with her husband and children, went to settle and to housekeep in London, describing to me, in terms of astonishment, the state in which the London butcher delivered a leg of mutton at her door.

'Figure to yourself, *ma chère amie*, even the long bone at the end of the leg was sent with bits of skin and wool adhering to it. There were lumps of fat hanging about it everywhere, and there was not the smallest attempt at trimming. It made me sick to look at it, and I felt that I could never touch a slice of *gigot* again. And the wretched butcher charges the

same price per pound for all that refuse as for good meat, so that though mutton is cheaper per pound in London than in Paris, it really turns out dearer because there is so much useless waste.'

I quite understood her woe, and thought of the rows of dainty *gigots* in the Paris shops, neatly trimmed, with their fat cut into enticing lacework designs, a delicate white-paper frill set around each of them, so as to present them as bouquets and not as mere fodder! Of course, these elaborations do not make the quality of the meat any better, but they make it far more appetizing, and they constitute those refinements which are so greatly appreciated by the customers of the Paris butcher. In a French kitchen the liquor in which vegetables have been boiled is never thrown away. It is carefully kept and forms the basis of excellent soups. Fewer puddings and sweets are consumed in a middle-class French family than among corresponding families in England, yet there are far more courses in each meal, because French people have their vegetables served apart from the meat as a separate dish.

And where the ordinary English family would have a bread or milk pudding upon the table, the corresponding French family would have plain fruit and finish up with a cup of coffee.

Housekeeping in Paris

It is quite easy to understand that the *menus* of the principal meals are proportionately long in French families, because there is no heavy early breakfast and no meal at tea-time to take the edge off healthy appetites. *Le five-o'clock* which is now fashionable in Paris is only partaken of by fashionable society, and even when taken, consists of the very lightest kickshaws. One is continually hearing French people refusing things to eat at tea-time on the plea that they do not wish to spoil their dinner!

It is undeniable that their meals are of great interest to French people. The care and the studied attention which they give to the subject prove this. The serious manner in which a Frenchman will bring his whole conscience to the ordering of his *menu* at a restaurant emphasizes this fact; and in French households, one of the things a Frenchman appreciates most in his wife is her knowledge of ordering a dinner with widely varying *menus*. I remember a literary woman of great ability and renown—the wife of a prominent politician—who, being broken down in health, was forced to leave home for a long stay in the South of France. She left her husband and a grown-up son of twenty-one in Paris at home alone. But before she left, she wrote out in a thick note-book, day by day, week by week.

and month by month, two daily *menus*—one for lunch and one for dinner—that covered the whole of her stay away from home. And this with due regard to all those provisions—meat, fish, vegetables, &c.—that were in season each month, and with due regard to their prices also. During the whole of her *séjour* in the *Midi*, every morning her son read out to the cook the *menus* for the day which his mother had so carefully prepared. I know of no English or American woman of her position who would and could have done the same thing.

It has often been said in England that because the cheap restaurants of Paris can offer a better prepared and better cooked meal for a small price than is offered at similar restaurants in London, it necessarily follows that table provisions must be cheaper in Paris than in London. But this logic is erroneous. The comparative cheapness of restaurants is due to thriftiness, economical management, and a thorough knowledge of cooking. And, as it is quite easy to understand, catering for a restaurant is comparatively cheaper than home catering, because the *restaurateurs* buy in larger quantities, and therefore at a much cheaper rate.

In Paris, the barest necessities of housekeeping

are in a measure far more expensive than the luxuries, one of the most expensive items being fuel. Except in those rarer Paris households which are centrally heated, the question of fire-making in the various rooms of a flat is a very important one. The best drawing-room coal that can be obtained in London in the summer-time to store for winter, which costs, in the ordinary course of events, something under £1 a ton, costs 68 to 75 francs (£3) for a thousand kilos, which is roughly speaking equal to one English ton. This is why there are so many slow-combustion apparatuses for heating purposes in Paris, for the thriftiness of French people runs to the art of making a little go a very long way. Generally speaking, in a house in Paris where there are two sitting-rooms and two or three bedrooms, the heating is so arranged that one or two slow-combustion stoves heat all the rooms. One stove is placed in one of the principal sitting-rooms and another in the antechamber. The doors of the bedrooms opening on to the antechamber are left wide ajar during the daytime, and thus the bedrooms are slightly warmed, while the two sitting-rooms, which usually communicate by means of a single or double door, are heated by a single stove.

The slow-combustion stove, which is never put

out from the beginning to the end of the winter, burns anthracite coal. This is the most expensive of all, but it burns the longest, and when carefully managed, each stove ought not to consume more than sixpennyworth of coal a day. By this means two *Salamandres* can heat a medium-sized flat for about a shilling a day. They are lit about the 1st of November and are not put out until mid-March, heating the flat throughout with a slow, gentle heat which permeates every corner and nook both day and night.

In the kitchen, too, the coal is very carefully and parsimoniously used. There is none of that lavish expenditure of fuel which you see in English households when the fire in a large kitchen range is kept alight for the sake of a little hot water that may be needed in the course of the day or to cook a sixpenny chop or a milk pudding, although the coal that is being consumed meanwhile costs far more than the food it cooks. In French families, very often, the kitchen stove is not lit more than two or three times in the week, a gas stove being used on alternate days, and in very small families the stove is rarely lit at all, the bath-water being always warmed by means of a gas *chauffe-bains*.

As far as actual provisions go, all articles of

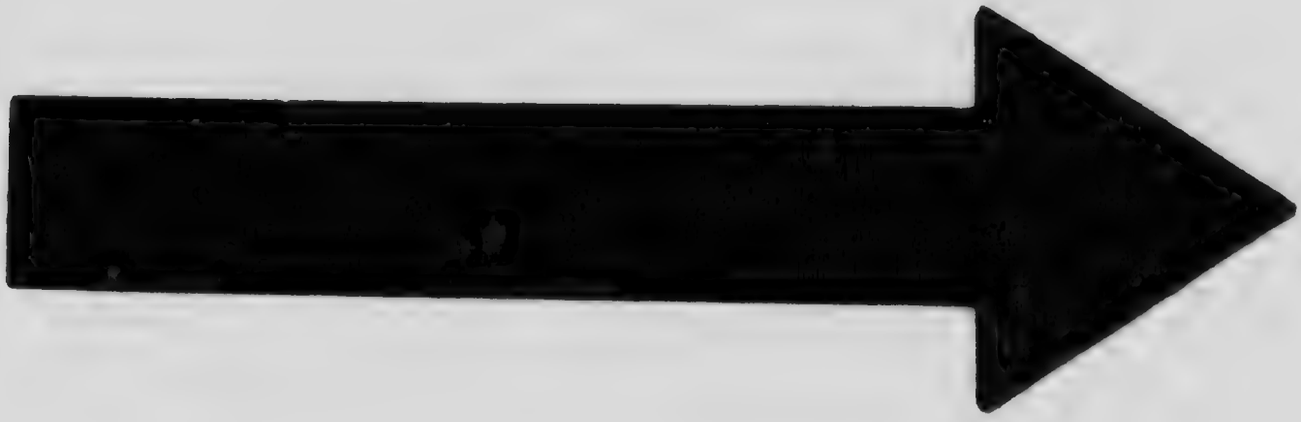
food are more expensive in Paris than in London, except perhaps such articles as the vegetables and fruit that are grown near Paris. Meat is extremely expensive. Good fillet of beef cannot be procured under 2 francs 50 centimes or 3 francs per pound (2s. or 2s. 6d.). A leg of mutton costs 1s. 4d. or 1s. 6d. per pound, and veal is about the same price as beef. Cooked ham is far more expensive, being about 4 francs per pound. English bacon, which, of course, has to be imported, costs 2s. and 2s. 6d. per pound. All those groceries which are imported are, of course, far more expensive because of the duty to be paid upon them. Tea, that used to be exorbitant in price, is now becoming a little cheaper owing to its popularity, but the cheapest is 5 or 6 francs per pound, and a really good quality costs 8 francs per pound. Coffee, which the French always buy in berries and grind, and even roast, at home, costs 2 francs for the very cheapest kind and 3 francs for the making of ordinary *café noir*. Lump sugar, until three or four years ago, owing to the sugar duties, cost 5½d. per pound. It had been reduced to 0·70 centimes a kilogramme, or 3½d. a pound, but has now 'gone up' again to 1 franc the kilogramme, or 5d. per pound. Cooking currants cost 1 franc per pound; all dried

fruit, figs, raisins, sultanas, &c., being just twice as expensive as in London. Rice is 6d. per pound. Demerara sugar for cooking purposes is the same price as white sugar, that is to say, 5d. Because of the price of sugar it is easy to understand that jam and confectionery are proportionately expensive. Cheaper qualities are an unknown thing in this country, and the kind of jam that is currently bought for ordinary tables costs about 1 franc (10d.) per pound. As the price of the principal ingredient of jam is so high, it naturally ensues that only the best and more delicate quality of jam is made in France. Jam is not eaten either for breakfast or tea, and is usually only used for dessert at the luncheon or dinner table in the winter-time, when fresh fruit is unavailable. Each grocer makes his own preserves in the home-made fashion, but he does not sell much, for nearly all French families make their own provision each summer while fruit is cheap. One is therefore certain of avoiding glucose and the other adulterations of machine-made jams, but one must pay the price. There is a well-known shop in the Rue de Séze which has been famous in Paris for many years and is alluded to in one of Balzac's novels. Here you get the best jam probably made in the world, but the cheapest you can buy there is 2.50 francs for a small pot of

less than a pound. Notwithstanding the fact that French people pay so high a price for home-protected sugar, the surplus stock, which figures thousands of pounds, is sent yearly to England, where it may be bought for 2d. per pound. Such is the result of State-aided industries!

It is a standing joke in France with those who disapprove the sugar bounties, that French beet-sugar dissolved in water is an excellent drink that is highly appreciated by English cows!

In a small village I know near Paris, thousands of pounds of fresh fruit as well as of beet-sugar are exported yearly to England. When the inhabitants of that village want to buy cheap jam, they buy English jam manufactured in England, made from the very fruit and sugar sent from their own country, and even though it has travelled backward and forward twice, it yet costs half the price of French-made jam! And this illustrates what I have just said concerning the better quality of produce exacted by the French buyer. All the most delicate fruit and vegetable produce of the village is sent to Paris, but the produce of inferior quality, plucked when barely mature, is shovelled into baskets and sent to London where the fruit is transformed into large quantities of machine-



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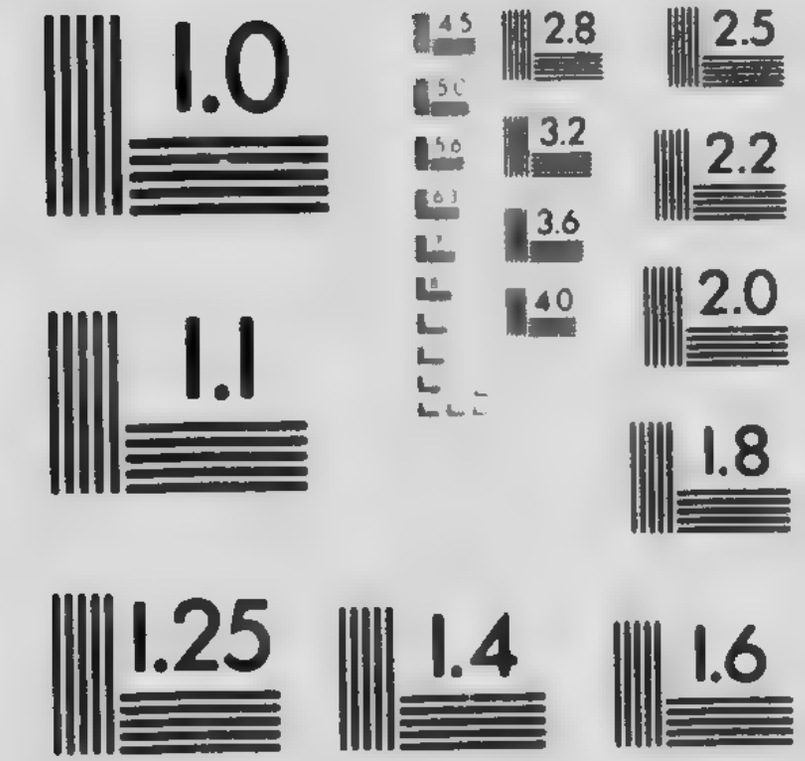

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made jam. Here incidentally, is the explanation of the so-called French fruit and vegetables which are so cheap and bad in London. They are hardly ripe before they are plucked and sent off.

All dairy produce in Paris is more expensive than in London, because London has no *octroi*, and because it can be brought duty-free from the chief producing countries, Normandy, Brittany, and Denmark. In Paris no good table butter can be procured under 2.50 francs per pound, while ordinary cooking butter, which is by courtesy called butter but is probably half margarine, is 2 francs 20 centimes.

This is also owing to the fact that the Paris consumer is far more fastidious than others, and although the household cook may be a good manager, yet she exacts the best and therefore more expensive ingredients for her *cuisine*.

(It is probably, too, because of duty and *octroi* that French perfumery—I mean the wares of the well-known houses, such as Roger & Gallet, Pinaud, &c.—are sold exactly at the same price in London as in Paris; in some cases, even, they are a penny or two cheaper a bottle.)

Though it is quite true that home-grown vegetables and fruit are comparatively cheap in Paris—although they are never so cheap as

American or Canadian fruit in England—all foreign fruit is much dearer. Oranges, bananas, and pine-apples are expensive luxuries, for even the most moderate shops cannot sell a really good orange under 1½d. or 2d. in the cheaper part of the season, and in certain smart shops they cost 40 or 50 centimes a piece. Bananas are rarely ever less than 1½d. each, and are very small for that.

Besides actual food, all household goods are more expensive in Paris than they are in London, and always for the same reason—that foreign manufactures pay duties. All dress materials, stuffs, ribbons, artificial flowers, *articles de ménage*, furniture, and furnishing materials are far cheaper in London than they are in Paris, and all cotton goods and those materials which contain cotton are twice as expensive in Paris as in London, for the duties on cotton are enormous. If one tries to buy those cheaper furnishing materials, half silk and half cotton, that are found at the various 'art' shops in London, one will not find them in Paris. When imported from England the quality which costs 1s. 11d. or 2s. 6d. a yard in London will cost 5 or 6 francs here. Cheap art muslin costs 9d. and 1s. in Paris when it costs 3d. or 6d. in London, though it is only fair to mention that a *mètre*

has 3 inches more than a yard. Indeed, because of these enormous duties upon cotton, the large English furnishing emporiums that have branches in Paris, such as Maple, Liberty, and Waring, do not import the cheaper kind of cotton goods, because of the enormous prices they are obliged to charge the buyer.

Concerning the cheaper kind of woollen and silk goods which are largely purchased by the working classes in England, one is bound to admit that there would be no market for such wares in Paris. The lower classes do not patronize cheap finery, and as the rates of pay for dressmakers and milliners are always high in Paris, even the French servant-girl who wants a new Sunday gown pays a comparatively big price for the material, which she purchases of good and serviceable quality.

The entire Paris household is managed quite differently to the corresponding households of London or New York, for all Parisian families of the middle classes live—and have lived for many generations—in flats, and not in small houses. Therefore Paris housekeepers are forced to manage with less space and with fewer servants, which makes a great difference in the interior economy of the home. This differentiates French housekeeping from the housekeeping of Anglo-Saxon

nations The custom of living in flats in Paris is so very old established that the residential apartments of the older kind—which still exist in the more central parts of the city—are of necessity built upon a less practical plan than the newer and more modern constructions of Paris, or of London and New York, which are provided with all the modern improvements. These older flats have none of the up-to-date contrivances for labour-saving comfort. They possess neither lifts, nor bathrooms, nor electric light, nor 'shoots' for kitchen and household refuse, nor central heating. All the dust and dirt and refuse of the kitchen must be carried down every evening by the maid to the general dustbin that is set in the courtyard at night for the purpose, and which is emptied by the municipal dustmen in the early morning hours.

For some inexplicable reason modern architects seem to favour the 'rabbit-hutch' style of architecture in all their plans for new flats, and seem also to be specially addicted to the English 'wedding-cake' style of decoration of the same—which does not make for beauty. When furnishing, it is impossible to ignore the white stucco adornments that are so flagrantly aggressive, for they are placed in every conceivable nook and cranny of the house. Nevertheless the labour-saving

apparatuses of these new abodes appeal to the more practical sense of many Parisians. For lifts, electric light, telephones, central heating are not the only improvements. Many of the newer buildings are provided with vacuum cleaners for the use of each flat, to be used in conjunction with its electric light fittings; special boxes in each hall are ready for letters that are collected each hour by the Post Office, and large clocks are placed in the entrance-halls and corridors, besides the delights of roof-gardens and wide terraces, in many instances, that 'lead out' of the dining-room, so that meals can be taken out in the open air in summer-time—a convenience which the Parisian greatly appreciates. All these are great inducements in favour of new flats, of which restricted space and truly prohibitive prices are the essential drawbacks. For the rentals of three tiny rooms and a diminutive bathroom, with *tout le confort moderne*, often exceed the price of large, older-fashioned flats with twice the number of spacious rooms.

To take advantage of these enormous profits on their property, a great many Paris landlords have thus transformed into modern abodes small and very cheap flats, situated far from the centre of the city, and formerly rented to poor clerks or State *employés*, and which they always found

difficult to let even at very cheap rentals. They turn some dark cupboard into a bathroom, put electric light into all the rooms and a general telephone in the *concierge's loge*, paint all walls and ceilings white, and insert small Louis XVI. glass panels into the doors, so that by this means an appearance of much light and air is obtained. Thus they let the improved flats to a much better class of tenant, while trebling and even quadrupling the rent.

But more practical tenants have discovered that the interest of the capital thus spent in 'improvements' does not really represent the greatly increased rent. That is why more prudent householders prefer to take a long lease of an older-fashioned and cheaper flat, and 'put in' the more modern conveniences themselves. By using movable slow-combustion stoves for heating purposes, and even after having put in electric light and a private telephone at their own expense, they find that the more commodious older-fashioned flat is considerably cheaper in the end. Moreover, there is a new method of heating which has begun to be popular in Paris, which is central *local* heating—that is to say, a central heating for each separate flat. This is accomplished by means of pipes set round each room, controlled by a single fire or gas heater in the kitchen. The whole flat

is thus warmed for the price of a single fire. But unless gas is used this does not obviate the difficulty of bringing up coal, which process is the pet abomination of all Paris housekeepers. The great preoccupation of the Paris house-wife is to minimize the labour of the single *bonne-à-tout-faire*, who generally does all the work of the flat. Hence the wide use among people of moderate means of the slow-combustion stove, which can be rolled from one room to another, necessitating the putting on of coal but once in twenty-four hours. In matters of heating the French always prefer an even moderate heat which permeates the whole establishment to the open coal fires as used in England, which, though so 'cheerful' in appearance, warm but one room at a time, and often only one part of it.

Even in those apartments which have not been subjected to 'improvements' the price of rent in Paris has increased at least 10 or 15 per cent. during the last three or four years. In some quarters the increase is as much as 40 per cent., especially for those flats which were let formerly at modest rentals varying between 1,500 francs and 3,000 francs per year. Among the poorer classes it has become almost impossible to find lodgings at a reasonable price, and even the Government is beginning to devise remedies. Landlords

refuse large families as tenants in almost every quarter. The sight of a poor family consisting of father and mother and eight or ten children wandering about the streets, homeless, in search of an abode, followed by a cart containing the furniture of the home, is not unknown in Paris to-day. Within the last ten years there has been an immense influx of residents of the poorer classes in the metropolis, and there are literally not enough cheap housings to 'go round,' even though so many of the working classes are lodged outside the fortifications. Landlords have become more and more exacting, and even intending tenants of the better classes are obliged to take flats as they find them—being only too happy to have secured a home—and undertake to do all the repairs themselves, the landlords flatly refusing to do anything.

It is a curious fact that Parisians, who are so fastidious in their personal ways, will often agree to move into lodgings whose walls have not been freshly papered for three or four years. If the paper be sufficiently 'clean,' the landlord will refuse to repaper, and only under great pressure will he consent to put on a single coating of fresh paint. If on taking a flat upon a lease of three, six, or nine years, an intending tenant were to presume to stipulate that the entire flat should

be repapered and painted at stated intervals, he would not find a single landlord in Paris to accept him as a tenant.

Though they will often consent to live between four walls that have not been cleaned for years, French people are most fastidious about sending their clothes twice or three times each season to the cleaners to be made sweet, wholesome, and fresh-smelling. And not only are the light indoor gowns and evening gowns of the ladies of a household regularly sent to the *teinturier*, but also all the thick heavy walking dresses of cloth and serge, as well as all the inner linings of fur cloaks, &c., and the clothes of the men of the family too.

Another special fastidiousness of the Parisians is the love of clean, renewed bedding. Every season in well-organized households the mattresses, bolsters, pillows, &c., are remade and covered with fresh linen covers. Even among the poorest families this is done, and when they cannot afford new linen covers for their mattresses, the housewife washes, irons, and mends the old covering while the wool of the mattress is being carded afresh. The *matelassière*, or mattress-maker, is a well-known figure in the life of the French household, both in Paris and in the provinces. She arrives by appointment at the

early morning, about eight o'clock, when the beds are empty of their occupants, and sets her trestles up in the courtyard or garden of the establishment. The mattress to be overhauled is brought down to her, and she promptly begins to rip it open, allowing no stray tufts of wool to escape her deft fingers, and then begins to card the wool. This process consists in unravelling the knots bit by bit, so that each morsel, being pulled apart, becomes light and springy once more. When this is accomplished by hand it is more expensive than when it is done by the special machinery which the *matelassière* brings with her. The recarding of a mattress is a comparatively cheap undertaking, which costs from 3 francs upwards.

When there is no fixed-in bathroom in the Paris flat, Parisians have a special method of taking a bath at home by having it sent from the bath establishment, of which there are always several in each quarter. A full-sized zinc bath is brought up to the flat by two strong men, and the hot water, contained in huge covered pails, is brought up by them also. A clean white sheet is placed over the inside of the bath, so that the bather's skin does not come into direct contact with the metal defiled by constant use by other people. When the bath has been used, the men

return to empty it and carry it away an hour later, so that it is in nobody's way. The cost of the entire process is about two shillings. Most French families now are addicted to the morning 'tub' of cold or tepid water, which is easier still of manipulation. Besides this, when the *bain à domicile* is considered too expensive, the members of a family go to the public bath-houses once or twice a week for a *bain chaud*. These establishments are very well arranged, the bathrooms being small, but commodious and well aired. A *bain complet* can be had here for sixpence or sevenpence, and all French domestic servants and *employées* patronize these establishments largely.

Because of the very restricted space of the flat, it is impossible in Paris to do the 'washing' at home, for there is little or no room to store up soiled linen, and no accommodation at all for washing and drying in the house. Therefore, Paris families 'put out' their washing. A *blanchisseuse*, who generally lives outside the city, calls each week for the linen to wash, bringing back with her that of the preceding week.

French women possess a far larger amount of personal and house linen, and of far better quality, than English women of the same class, and take great pride in their linen presses.

In the provinces, where all the washing is done at home, the provisions of linen are so great that most families have a general *lessive* but once every three or six months. Parisiennes possess less linen, however, for they have far less room to keep it. Nevertheless, it would be quite possible for a Parisienne to defer sending any house or personal linen to the wash for five or six weeks without being in the least inconvenienced. Even servant-girls in France possess good personal linen, well cut and of strong material, simply trimmed with plain *festons* or crochet lace, generally made by themselves. Indeed, the *trousseau* of a French *bonne-à-tout-faire* might put many English ladies to shame! An old servant of mine, who had been in service for some months in a good English family, told me that upon one occasion, the washerwoman not having returned the family linen at a promised date, she had lent a nightgown of her own to each of the female members of the family, awaiting the tardy return of the linen-basket!

The washerwoman's bill being a large item in the weekly budget, many small devices are used in Paris by the thrifty housekeeper to reduce this expense. To economize on the washing of table-linen, for instance, there is an institution well known in France under the name of *nappe de*

famille. This is the family tablecloth of white American cloth, which is used in middle-class families for the midday meal, more especially in those families where there are children. These are to be bought in all qualities and sizes in all the larger shops, and are most practical for every-day use. They are impervious to stains, which can be wiped off at once with a damp cloth or rag. After the meal they can be rolled up neatly and put away without any crease. They last for years, and save the washing bill meanwhile. Besides this, to economize the washing of many serviettes, each member of the family possesses a sort of case or bag made of embroidered linen to hold his or her serviette, which is only changed once a week. By this means it is kept free from dust or from any unclean contact. The table and bed linen used in a French family is always of real linen, and not of cotton, which, in the eye of the prudent French housekeeper, is not worth the price of its washing. This, always upon the same principle that it is the more expensive article which costs less in the end because it does better service and lasts longer.

The distribution and use of the rooms in a French household differ widely from the distribution and use of rooms in an Anglo-Saxon home. In Paris, as the flat is always restricted in size,

each member of a family, having his or her own bedroom, considers it as the one living-room sacred to themselves and their intimate friends alone. The general living-room is usually the dining-room, but those who wish for seclusion at any time of the day seek the privacy of their bedroom, which is thus more than a mere sleeping apartment, for it is a study or boudoir also. Every French bedroom boasts a writing-table and a sofa. No washstand or *toilette* paraphernalia is to be seen there. All washing and dressing implements are stowed away in the *cabinet de toilette* which always accompanies a French bedroom. If there are two or three girls in a family, they may all use the same *cabinet de toilette*, but their bedrooms are always arranged as sitting-rooms, where they read and study and receive their friends. When little French girls go 'to spend the day' with one of their schoolfellows, it is always in the child's bedroom that the young guests are received and remain for the whole afternoon. But though the French bedroom is a sitting-room as well as a sleeping apartment, the *cabinet de toilette* is a very sacred sanctum, where no one is allowed to penetrate, even one's private and most intimate friends, except upon a special invitation. No self-respecting French husband would dare to enter

the *cabinet de toilette* of his wife. I remember once, when visiting a very dear friend, she asked me into her *toilette* to brush my hair. As I stood in front of her dressing-table, the door of the room being open, her husband passed down the passage outside. Quite thoughtlessly, I called to him to join us and to give his opinion concerning a subject we were discussing. But, though almost standing upon the threshold, he replied, 'My dear friend, I should never presume to enter my wife's *cabinet de toilette* without her express permission!' Needless to say, in this case, the permission was smilingly given, and he came in. But he considered it as a great privilege. And it was one indeed.

There is far less sacredness about the French bedroom, because it is accepted as a living-room as well as a sleeping apartment. Many French ladies receive all their friends of both sexes in their bedroom upon all days of the week except upon the official 'at home' day, when the *salons* are used. In the older French provincial families the *salon* is never used except for these more formal receptions. It is not considered as a living-room at all, but as a showroom that is entirely closed except for festive and ceremonious receptions. Nevertheless, it is generally the best room of the house.

Housekeeping in Paris

As Paris flats are small, it often happens that, when a party is being given, one or two of the bedrooms of the establishment are thrown open to the guests as extra reception-rooms, where more private conversation may take place. As the hostess's room is generally one of the best of the house, well furnished and daintily arranged, it looks exactly like a reception-room, except for the presence of the bed—generally a majestic and imposing structure of carved wood, draped with silk and laces, and entirely covered with a wide silk or lace coverlet that hides the bed-linen entirely—not only the sheets, but the pillows also. Indeed, in no French bedroom is the bed ever made with the bed-linen apparent, the reason for this being precisely the dual nature of the sleeping apartment.

XIV

THE 'BONNE-À-TOUT-FAIRE'

THE *bonne-à-tout-faire* is the typical servant of the middle-class French family. She may even be said to typify middle-class French life. She does the whole work of the household, but she has very little in common with the English 'general,' being far more active both in mind and body, and having neither the slovenliness nor the incapacity of her English *confrère*. An English writer who knew France well has aptly described the *bonne-à-tout-faire* as 'the best man in France to-day.' The English writer was quite right if he spoke of her at her best, but he was quite wrong if he alluded to her at her worst, that is to say, as she tends to become of late years. Some years ago it was still possible to find the *bonne* of the old type, who was part of the family she served, who *tutoyéd* the children, whom she almost regarded as hers, and who shared the sorrows and joys of her master and

mistress as if they were her own. But ill-digested democratic ideas have done much to destroy the type of the perfect *bonne*. She has now become too Republican, too free and easy. She no longer alludes to her employers as *le maître* and *la maîtresse*, but as the *patron* and the *patronne*, which are the terms used by *employées* in factories.

The factories, indeed, have done much to reduce the number of domestic servants in France, by offering the inducement of certain hours of liberty to the working girl. She does not stop to consider that domestic service is far more remunerative than factory work, providing lodging, food, firing, lighting, and washing as well as wages. She sees only the advantages of shorter working hours, more freedom, and less thoughtful labour. In 1866 there were 1,311,471 female servants in France; in 1896 they numbered but 703,148.

A *bonne-à-tout-faire*, as her designation indicates, can perform all kinds of household duties, and generally speaking performs them well. She can do housework on a most scientific plan; she can cook well and wait at table, she can also wash and iron and sew, look after the children, and even play the duenna to the *jeunes filles* of the family.

She is generally capable and hard-working. Occasionally, too, she is devoted. But do not ask her to be virtuous also. Generally she is not so. She has a heart and brain as well as a temperament, and Parisian mistresses have to learn to close their eyes to many things. She is no hypocrite, however, and often when applying for a new place she will candidly state that she must demand good wages because she has responsibilities. Notwithstanding these, she often marries late in life, and, because of her practical knowledge, is a good investment for a working man.

Owing to the interior arrangement of flat-life in Paris, the *bonne-à-tout-faire* is the only indoor servant kept by most families, even by those in well-to-do circumstances. Nearly all female servants in France start life in the position of a *bonne-à-tout-faire*, for it gives knowledge and experience. Some specialize later as cooks, housemaids, or ladies'-maids, according to their tastes, while others are content to remain *bonnes*.

The *bonne-à-tout-faire* can, in a word, turn her hand to anything, and does most things well. If she is not always as respectful in her speech as she might be with her employers, it is owing to her Republican soul and tongue, for in her village

school of late years, where she has remained till she has her *certificat d'études* at the age of thirteen, she has learned to retort on the 'I-am-as-good-as-you-are-any-day' principle. But if she stays a long time in one place, she becomes a friend of the family, gives her advice on all matters freely and outspokenly, and is devoted to the family, whose interests are second only to her own. Of course, this feeling is reciprocal. I have known servants ask their mistress to choose their gowns, and to give them advice as to quality, price, &c., and the advice is always willingly given. It has often happened, even to myself, when going out in the morning shopping, for my servant to ask me to choose her some material or trimming, &c., which she wants for herself, and I know several other *patronnes* who do the same. It frequently happens also, when a *bonne* has a friend out of place, that her employers allow her to invite her friend to stay at the house while looking for employment, and in many cases the children of servants have been practically adopted like children of the house by employers attached to their servants. The feeling of caste being weaker in France than in England, there is not the gulf that exists between mistress and maid in England. When a member of the

family is ill, the servant's devotion proceeds from affection as well as from a feeling of duty that is part of her service. Yet one must never be astonished if, even after long devotion, the *bonne* suddenly gives her 'eight days' notice' in a moment of hasty temper!

French servants are engaged by the month—that is to say, their wages are reckoned and paid by the month, and not by the year as in England—but, on the other hand, they are able to quit with the formality of eight days' notice, or even, within recent years, without any notice at all. *Je donne mes huit jours à Madame* is the usual formula, and immediately the mistress can look for another servant. As for the servant herself, as soon as she has given notice she is entitled to two hours' freedom every day to look for another place. So keen is a servant upon this right, that even when she has secured another situation, she will go out for those two hours or remain upstairs in her own room during the time, persistently refusing to do a single stroke of work. As for the mistress, she is entitled to send away an unsatisfactory servant at a moment's notice, provided she gives her a week's wages in advance. Long experience has taught me that when a servant has 'given her eight days' it is far cheaper for

the mistress to give a week's wages and let her go at once, for during the last week the two hours' outing will mysteriously occupy the best part of the day, more crockery than usual will smash itself, and very little of the housework will be done at all. A week's advance wage is therefore far more economical in the end.

The French servant is not ashamed to be a servant and to be taken for such, though she is convinced that a servant is every bit as good as anybody else, but she does consider it a hardship to live *chez les autres*, as she calls it. Her Republicanism prompts her to discard her cap, and there is no question now of caps when engaging a servant, as no servants in Paris wear them. The old frilled *bonnet* with long strings which the *bonne* wore some years ago is now only seen on the heads of very old-fashioned servants. Although she consents to wear an apron, I find it most difficult to get a French *bonne* to wear a frilled bib-apron like those of the English parlour-maid, which, of late years, have been introduced in Paris. For some reason or other, she evidently considers the bib as particularly demeaning, for she will either tuck it in at the waist, allowing it to hang down hidden behind the apron in front, or she will cut it off entirely.

Servants' aprons, of whatever kind they may be, are always the property of the mistress of the establishment and form part of the house-linen. I have very often, when looking over my linen-cupboard, found three or four linen bibs cut off from frilled aprons hidden away behind a pile of sheets. If by chance I had asked what had become of the bib of the apron actually being worn, I had always been told that it had either been torn in the wash or stained, or been the victim of some terrible disaster. But now when I find several bibs hidden away at the back of the linen-cupboard, I always know what it means. . . . I have never been able to understand why the French *bonne* objects more to the bib than to the apron itself, but I think that she imagines it to be a more demeaning sign of her servitude than the simple apron, which is also worn by housewives of the working classes in their own *ménages*.

A well-bred Frenchman always raises his hat to the maid who opens the door to him and addresses her as *mademoiselle*, and this emphasizes the respect to which the serving-maid is entitled. But she herself, even if she addresses her employers in the third person, is not at all convinced that they are superior to her because she waits upon them. She is inclined to respect the brain and position of her employers rather

than their money, and will be always prouder of serving intellectuals than mere *bourgeois*.

As the *bonne* works hard during the day, she prizes above all her liberty and her privacy, and these she finds in her sixth-floor garret at night after her work is done. The *chambre de bonne au sixième* is unknown in England, even among flat-dwellers. In every Paris house the sixth floor is entirely composed of small single rooms, all opening on a long corridor and all numbered. At the end of each corridor is a lavatory and a water tap, where servants can draw the water for their own needs in their rooms. Some of the rooms are very small and are provided only with the skylight windows called *tabatières*. Each flat has one or more rooms allotted to it, according to its size and importance, which are included in the rent. These are exclusively the servants' quarters. They are plainly and simply furnished, but comfortless though they may be, and often are, the ordinary French servant will prefer them to the most luxuriously furnished, carpeted, and curtained room inside the flat. Indeed, it is very difficult to get a servant who will consent to sleep in the flat, and although most families prefer not giving up one of the rooms of the flat to a servant, when a lady lives alone and wishes her servant to be near her

at night in case of need, she will find a great difficulty in obtaining one who will consent to sleep indoors. For, once in her sixth-floor garret, which is often too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer, the *bonne* feels that she belongs to herself again and is a free and independent human being once more.

But the sixth floor is a great peril for the young Paris servant. Here she meets all the other servants of the house, both male and female, when she retires. Here tittle-tattle of all sorts is rife, scandals are related and tricks to deceive the employers taught by the older servants to the new. Visits are paid from room to room, outside callers being often admitted with the connivance of the *concierge*, who for her aid will exact a fine from the *bonne* or threaten to betray her to her mistress.

On the sixth floor, the most intimate affairs of the household are discussed with the coarse interpretation of the domestic soul. For even when a *bonne* is devoted to her mistress she will always interpret her actions in the worse sense—though, to her mind, it is not the worst sense—and she does not realize what harm she may be doing in discussing the affairs of the family according to the light of her own morals and making them the public knowledge of the quarter.

The 'Bonne-à-tout-faire'

So far as her service is concerned, the *bonne-à-tout-faire*, at her best, is clever and reliable. She will always know the right and tactful thing to say to your acquaintances if you are not at home. She will never be at a loss in an emergency when a subtle message is to be delivered. And when you suddenly spring upon her an unexpected guest for dinner at a moment's notice, she often rises to the occasion with true spirit. She will be quite willing to leave any regular work and rush off down five flights of stairs with a telegram or to get some suddenly necessary article. For as a rule the young *bonne-à-tout-faire* likes *l'imprévu*, and suddenly disturbed plans upset neither her equilibrium nor her temper. Being a temperamental worker and not a plodder, she welcomes a change of any sort in her routine. In the absence of her mistress she will receive her friends charmingly, with all the grace of a *dame du monde*, give news and ask news of all the caller's family on her mistress's behalf, as she would do herself. She has all the social qualities of Frenchwomen, be they great ladies or peasants. She also generally possesses tact and knows how to send away importunate callers without offending them.

Being a creature of fastidious tastes, the *bonne-*

à-tout-faire is generally very *difficile* in the matter of her own food. She will refuse to touch her meat if it is not cooked and flavoured exactly to suit her palate. She is herself a born cook, and has a far more exacting taste than an English servant. Being considered as part of the family, she enjoys the same food as her employers in quantity and quality. She likes her red wine and coffee to be of the best, and I can assure you she is a *connaisseuse*. Ill-flavoured sauces and badly cooked meat find no favour with her, and she would rather go without her meal than eat food that is not varied. Besides her *petit déjeuner*, which consists of *café au lait* or chocolate, she has two meals a day. At luncheon she has eggs or fish, meat, vegetables, bread and cheese, &c. In the evening she enjoys the same complete *menu*, plus soup.

The *bonne-à-tout-faire* is generally up at 6.30 in the morning and often goes to bed very late. Before 8 a.m. she has already done a great deal of the rougher housework, and has served the *petit déjeuner* in the bedrooms. Between 8 and 12 a.m. she has made the beds, dusted the rooms (though it is only fair to say that in France, when only one servant is kept, young girls attend to their own bedrooms), done the

marketing, prepared and dished up the luncheon. It seems incredible to English people, but so it is. After she has lunched and washed up, she dresses and then sits down to her sewing and mending, or ironing, or washing, and begins to prepare the evening meal, which she cooks and serves. Then after dinner she washes up again, prepares the bedrooms, and finally leaves the flat to return to her sixth-floor room, or to go out and see her friends. She works far more and demands fewer holidays than English servants who do not possess half her efficiency. Two Sunday afternoons a month, after 12 o'clock, is all she regularly asks—but of course she finds some relaxation in the free sixth-floor life after working hours. She dresses neatly and does not try to ape her mistress in cheap and common materials, but has good, honest, serviceable gowns both for indoor and outdoor wear. She affects black woollen stuff for her gowns, felt or straw hats trimmed with plain ribbons for her millinery. She buys neither cheap laces nor furs nor satins; she never tries to appear what she is not.

The wages of the *bonne-à-tout-faire* in Paris are generally 50 to 60 francs a month, besides wine money, which is generally 10 francs a month. Her washing is paid for with the linen

of the family, and she is limited to a shilling to eighteenpence for it per week.

To her earnings must be added the sums which accrue to her from those most pernicious systems called the *sou du franc* and *faire danser l'anse du panier*. Now, as the *bonne-à-tout-faire*, like the cooks in those establishments where several servants are kept, does all the shopping—for tradespeople rarely call for orders in Paris where the system of weekly books is not favoured—the fees which she levies righteously or unrighteously on the purchases she makes, amount to a large monthly sum that adds considerably to her income. Servants have told me that these perquisites often double the amount of their wages. It is certainly by means of personal thrift, economy and thieving that servants often manage to put by sufficiently large sums of money, at the end of many years' service, to be able to set themselves up in business. It is a well-known fact that in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, which is the *quartier* of the rich old aristocratic families who treat their servants well and keep them for many years, the smaller tradespeople are all retired servants. The *sou du franc* (a halfpenny in the franc) is a recognized fee levied upon each franc spent, and is given to her by the tradesmen themselves

THE BONNE-A-TOUT-FAIRE AT THE MARKET.
From the special drawing by Frederic Regamey.

when she pays at the desk. For five francs' worth of meat at the butcher's she receives five *sous*, or twopence-halfpenny, and for three francs' worth of fruit and vegetables she receives three-halfpence, and so forth. It is therefore not surprising that she does all she can to mount up the bill at each shop. As it is the tradesman who gives the money, he, of course, takes it out of the value of the customer's goods, and instead of giving the full value of meat for three francs, for instance, he gives only value for two francs eighty, or even less, on the plea that he must give the halfpenny on the franc to the servant, otherwise she would not favour his shop. The butchers, bakers, grocers, milkmen, coal-merchants, &c., all give it, for without it they know that they would lose the custom of the servant. It has often happened to me to give orders that certain provisions should be bought at certain places. When I discover that my orders have not been complied with, I am told that it is because the provisions I have recommended are of an inferior quality, or are not fresh, &c. This, freely translated, means that at that particular shop they have refused to pay the *sou du franc*.

This abuse is a crying evil which French mistresses have often tried to suppress, but when

a lady attempts to attend to her own marketing or to beg the tradespeople to call for orders, *Madame la Bonne* immediately gives her eight days' notice.

Once, from motives of economy, I ordered my meat to be sent twice a week from the provinces. This of course did away with the *bonne's* immediate profit at the Paris butcher's. But as the meat cost me considerably less, and I was anxious to retain my servant, I myself paid her one *sou* in each franc of the monthly bill that was sent by postal order. But even then she was not content, and continually found fault with the quality of the meat or the way it was cut up. As I did not allow myself to be influenced by her opinions, she then declared that it could not keep fresh for two days at a time, and deliberately let it spoil. So that finally I had to give up my provincial provider and return to the Paris butcher, although the provincial meat, which was excellent, including both packing and carriage, cost me exactly half the price of Paris-bought goods.

Besides the *sou du franc*, which is a forcibly accepted swindle, there is *faire danser l'anse du panier*, which is an illicit swindle. This is a slang expression—'to make the handle of the basket dance,' which means that the servant

increases the price paid for each article upon the household book, which, of course, she keeps herself. If she pays sixty centimes for a cauliflower she will charge eighty centimes in the book; a penny lemon will be set down at three-halfpence, and so forth. By adding a penny here and there on such articles, she makes these further profits, so that the natural honesty of the *bonne-à-tout-faire* is the only guarantee a mistress can have against these abuses.

As French families spend proportionately a great deal for their food, these 'perks' may reach large sums. A cook in a well-to-do family of three persons and two servants once told me that she more than doubled the monthly sum of her wages—sixty francs—out of her marketing!

But as she is of French peasant origin, the *bonne-à-tout-faire*, however depredatory she be on her mistress, is generally most thrifty and economical where her own interests are concerned. She may fling about and spoil her mistress's clothes and linen, but she will be most careful with her own. Saving money with her is almost an instinct, and even if she has neither child to keep nor old parents to help, she saves her own wages in the hope of being able to retire from service as early as possible. She never spends her substance upon cheap finery with the

proverbial improvidence of the English servant, and when she marries later in life—which she often does, and she generally makes a capital wife and good manager—she has either a small dowry ready by her or still remains in service after her marriage until she has put sufficient capital by to retire. For her one hope is to be no longer *chez les autres.*

The French servant, as a rule, retains the special characteristics of her own particular province, the fact of her service not altering her in essentials. She never has a truly subservient soul, and each province having special attributes, Paris housekeepers know that women from Bordeaux and Burgundy will be good cooks; girls from the southern provinces in the Rhone district will be devoted, though quick-tempered and inclined to overlook dusty corners; Bretons will be somewhat melancholy and reserved, not over-clean, but proud and discreet and comparatively honest concerning the *anse du panier.* But none will ever let you forget that to be *chez les autres* is to their minds a punishment worse than death itself.

XV

THE BANE OF PARIS LIFE—*LA CONCIERGE*

THERE is, perhaps, no class of individuals in Paris so despised and so railed at as the *concierge*, except, perhaps, the *cochers*. But no! Even these only come second on the list.

The *concierge* in Paris corresponds only in a certain degree to the caretaker of London flats, but morally he in no way resembles that worthy and decorative person. Here the *concierge* is the servant and agent of the landlord alone, and represents the landlord's interests *only* with regard to the inhabitants of the flats. He is appointed and paid by the landlord and owes no allegiance but to him. His duties are to show the empty flats to prospective tenants, to collect rents four times a year for the landlord, and to deliver letters three times a day at the door of each tenant. Besides this, the *concierge* must keep the staircase clean, and light all the gas

or electric lamps on the stairs and in the halls and passages of the building. He must see that the various dustbins from each flat are brought down and emptied into the general dustbin in the courtyard every night. He must pull the string that automatically opens the street door after dark each time the bell is rung from outside or when tenants or their visitors ask him to do so from the inside. He must assure the safety of the house and allow no one to enter unknown to him after dark who might annoy or rob the residents.

These alone are his duties. The prerogatives which he usurps are as countless as the grains of sand upon the seashore.

To be accurate, the *concierge* really means an entire family. When the landlord appoints the keeper of his establishment it is generally the man of the family who bears the title of the *concierge*. But the *concierge* being, generally, a married man, there is also *la concierge* in the person of his wife, not to mention one, two or three small children which form the family of the *loge*. The *loge* usually consists of two rooms, though in smaller houses only one room is allotted to the bombastic individual at the entrance.

Of the two rooms, the back one is generally

furnished as a bedroom; the front one, which is in direct communication with the tenants, serves as kitchen, dining-room, and general sitting-room for the family.

The *concierge* is housed free, and is paid by the landlord some nominal sum which is generally speaking not sufficient for a family to live upon. For that reason *Monsieur le Concierge* generally has some outdoor employment, leaving *Madame la Concierge* to reign in the lodge. Probably it is because the income of the *concierge* is so limited that *Madame la Concierge*—who is above all a practical housekeeper and looks to make ends meet comfortably—levies taxes upon all incoming provender—coal, wine, wood, &c. —of the tenants. She also has an abnormal greed for tips, and when these fail to raise her budget in the necessary proportion, she makes it her duty by fair means or foul—more usually by foul—to find out all the business of the tenants, to interpret their actions according to her own low standard, and to turn the knowledge thus acquired into a fruitful source for blackmail. For it is more or less the power of blackmail which makes the inhabitant of Paris quail before this Gorgon of the gates. One's simplest actions—once they have been passed through the medium of the *concierge's* criticism—appear

in the light of most heinous crimes. And thus are bribes showered upon her in the vain hope that she will hold her tongue to the entire quarter, concerning not what one really does, but what she supposes one does.

It is most impossible for a young woman—maid, wife, or widow—who is not rich to hope for the good opinion of her *concierge*. Any man who goes up to her flat, in whatever capacity, is a suspected character at the lodge, any relations between men and women in the mind of a *concierge* necessarily being of an immoral character. On the other hand, women of avowedly bad repute, who bribe the *concierge* heavily, are always the most esteemed and respected of tenants.

Unfortunately, although the *concierge* has nothing whatever to do with the tenants, once the door of their flat is closed, non-official relations are established between the *concierge* and the tenants by means of the post. Unlike the English postal authorities, the heads of the French Post Office decided that in order to save their *employés* the trouble of delivering letters at each flat separately, the correspondence of the entire building—there are often thirty or forty flats in the same house—should be left at the lodge of the *concierge*. I remember conversing with the

Postmaster-General and protesting against the influence and the responsibility thus obtained by the *concierge*, and he explained to me that the law stipulates that letters should be delivered 'to the landlord or to his representatives.' This being a *law*, there is nothing to say. But it is astonishing that Parisians allow this edict to remain uncancelled. Now the *concierge's* business is to take up the letters three times a day—morning, noon, and evening—but as there are eight deliveries each day at the lodge, tenants are obliged to ask for their letters during the intervening hours. This often leads to many discussions and misunderstandings between the *concierge* and the tenant, for if *la concierge* bears a grudge against her tenant, she can pretend that a long-expected letter has not been delivered, when it has been in the lodge several hours. If a note is brought by hand and left at the lodge, and is not immediately taken up to the flat, although the *concierge* is not legally bound to deliver it, the tenant may accuse the *concierge* of keeping back his letters. The *concierge* then replies that she is not the tenant's servant and is only bound to deliver postal correspondence, and that if he accepts a letter by hand he does so to oblige the tenant. And so on. The worst of it is that this is perfectly

true. No letters, papers, or magazines or messages left at the lodge except by the postman are bound to be delivered. When they are accepted, it is a favour on the part of the *concierge*, and hence the pernicious habit of feeing the *concierge* for small services. Friends call, and learning that one is out, and not wishing to take the trouble of going as far as the flat on what might be a useless errand, leave their card or a message at the lodge. Of course, cards and messages are delivered more or less accurately, according to the amount of fees given by the tenant. Strangers who do not know the exact position of the *concierge* in the Paris house, ought to learn that he is the servant of the landlord and in no way the common servant of the tenants, all duties except the giving of letters to the tenant being purely gratuitous—or non-gratuitous. The *concierge's* position offers him ample opportunities of interfering with the tenants, because of this undefined position, which might be entirely suppressed if letters were taken up separately by the postman to each flat, as is customary in London, and if Parisians themselves had not adopted the pernicious habit of making enquiries at the lodge, instead of going straight up to a flat.

Needless to say, as all one's correspondence passes through the lodge, and as the *concierge's*

discretion is of the very lowest quality, everything is inspected there, letters often being opened by steam processes, and interesting post-cards committed to memory. Thus the most private business of the tenants becomes public property at the lodge. Very often letters and post-cards are kept back for several days to annoy or punish refractory tenants. If one lives on the fifth floor and the fourth floor happens to be empty, one may await one's correspondence for days together, for *Madame la Concierge* will find it too tiring to mount five flights of stairs with the letters of a single tenant, especially for a poor fifth-floor occupant!

As legally the *concierge* is not bound to do anything else for the tenants than bring up their letters, small extra services that are sometimes required, such as the hailing of cabs, the bringing up of luggage, &c., are items which have to be paid for, one might almost say, at a recognized tariff. Yet notwithstanding these separate tips which are given each time a new service is rendered, there are other perquisites which are almost wages, and which the *concierge* expects as his right, goodness knows for what reason! These perquisites are the *étrennes*, or New Year's gift, and the *denier à Dieu* (which the *concierge* himself comically and ignorantly calls the *dernier*

adieu). I have never heard of any person refusing to pay these customary fees, and have often wondered what would happen if one refused to do so.

The *étrennes* are generally calculated upon a scale which represents the hundredth part of one's rent. Thus, a tenant who pays 2,500 francs a year for his rent would give 25 francs to the *concierge* on New Year's Day. A tenant paying 4,000 francs annual rent would give 40 francs. And so forth. Paris tenants are so anxious, alas! to propitiate the *concierge* that they generally give 10 or 15 francs more than they need do. The *denier à Dieu* is given when the business concerning the taking of the flat is supposed to be entirely finished. Until that moment, which, of course, immediately precedes the signing of the agreement, one may recant on both sides. The *denier à Dieu*, like the *étrennes*, is generally calculated on a basis of one per cent. of the rent. Yet *concierges* grumble if one adheres strictly to this rule.

I shall always remember the expression of outraged pride on the face of a *concierge* when I once went with a young English girl to help her to decide on a small flat she was taking. The rent was seven hundred francs, so my friend,

according to the information she had received as to the right thing to do, put seven francs into the open palm of the old wretch. The creature looked at the silver disdainfully, and turning up her nose, said with scorn, 'I never take less than *gold!*'

Yet these fees are only *customary* and are not enforcible by law, though when the figure of the *étrennes* or *denier* is not to the taste of the lady of the lodge she soon lets her tenant know her opinion, for she is absolutely shameless in the matter of begging and cringing, and only esteems those who have money—no matter what its source may be—to grease her greasy paw to its full expectations.

It is useful for visitors to Paris to know that the *concierge* in no way owes them her services, neither in the matter of taking up letters or luggage or messages. The householder's name alone is supposed to be known to the *concierge*, and she is well within her rights if she refuses service for others besides the regular tenants. Hence another occasion for tips, for, of course, visitors require these services. This is even applicable to houses where there is a *pension de famille*.

English and American people writing to their friends abroad should always be careful to indite the envelopes *chez Monsieur* or *Madame* (care

of Mr. or Mrs.), the name of the householder with whom the friend are staying being clearly written. This is not only a courtesy shown towards the host and hostess, but the guardian of the lodge would be within her rights if she refused letters at the door bearing the name of visitors unknown to her, on the plea that she has no regular tenant of the name.

The lodge of the *concierge* is a happy meeting-place, after working-hours, for all the servants of the house. Here the business and private affairs of the tenants are freely commented upon according to the lights of the worthies who discuss them. It is rare that the servants come empty-handed; bottles of wine, dainties from the dining-room *buffet*, pieces of lace or material from the mistress's cupboards, to decorate the gowns of the *concierge's* children, are brought as propitiatory gifts—all these articles, of course, being levied from the flat without the knowledge of the *patrons*. The *bonnes*, in their turn, are also the victims of the *concierge*, for when they wish to go out at night the *concierge* will not *tirer le cordon* for them, unless paid by them to do so; and when an unfortunate servant goes out at night and forgets to 'grease the paw' held out at the lodge, the *concierge* finds that next day it is her solemn and moral duty to warn the mistress of her servant's

nightly outings, which naturally, in the opinion of the *concierge*, are bound to be immoral.

Thus a *concierge*, if so disposed, can force you to quarrel with every one and make your social life a misery. She will tell all callers that you are out, neglect to deliver messages or parcels or cards. It is unimaginable to what degree she can be a hindrance and an annoyance, if not a positive danger. Recourse to the landlord will be of no avail against her, for if she collects his rents regularly, and keeps the house comparatively clean, what matters it to the landlord? Is it to be wondered at, therefore, since one is forced to submit to the tyranny of the *concierge*, that one makes every effort to propitiate her by unlimited tipping?

Foreigners may wonder why it is that Parisians submit to such gaolers, and it is indeed strange, seeing their unpopularity, that no association has been formed for their suppression. If the postal authorities would only deliver letters at each flat, as in London, and allow each tenant to have an outdoor key, the *concierge* would be entirely done away with so far as the comfort of the inmates is concerned, for the cleaning and lighting of the house would not necessitate the indoor residence of these abominable officials, and at night the house could be guarded by special guardians. When one considers the enormous authority of

these wretches, and the power they have for making one's life a misery, one wonders that the whole of Paris has not risen in arms against *les concierges* long ago. But to accomplish this, it would appear that another French Revolution were necessary!

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